BUSINESS / B1
Gov't plans to set up economic zones for agricultural businesses

ENTERTAINMENT / G1
2 Ivatan children star in Cinemalaya Film Festival entry

WORLD / A28
Legendary Russian cellist Rostropovich dies

SPORTS / A31
La Salle draws 1st blood vs Ateneo in preseason tourney

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
ALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, April 30, 2007 ★★ Vol. 31 / No. 141

DINAGYANG IN METRO
Cara Jeanne Galano, Miss Dinagyang Festival of Iloilo City rides on the huge Dinagyang float during the Aliwan Festival parade in Pasay City. Twenty teams representing the country's top festivals competed in Saturday's event.

40% of Pinoys believe GMA will cheat–GO

Opposition's media ads based on survey by SWS

By Norman Bordadora

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION'S AD CAMPAIGN THAT FEATURES poverty and corruption, which the administration's Team Unity senatorial slate tagged as "hate politics," is backed by findings of a Social Weather Stations survey showing distrust in and disconsent with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The survey found that 40 percent of 1,500 respondents randomly selected nationwide agreed with the statement that Ms. Arroyo "will cheat in the May 2007 elections for her candidates to win." Twenty percent disagreed and 33 percent were undecided.

The survey, conducted on March 18-23, was commissioned by the Genuine Opposition. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

But TU said the GO-commissioned survey was "highly anomalous."

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, TU campaign strategist, said the SWS questionnaire did not only contain "leading questions" but was also "loaded with misleading statements."

"From the moment you look at the questions, you can sense that there's going to be already 'That's why the survey is very biased,' very caution. And we mustn't lose you look at it, it's a one-sided survey. In fact, we were surprised why SWS allowed itself to use those kind of leading and one-sided questions," said Evardone.

Evardone accused SWS of selling out to the opposition.

The opposition defended the issuance the results of the survey titled "SWS March 2007 Issues Survey."

The poll also found that 46 percent believed the President "allows lies about things that she says to the public."

Only 18 percent disagreed with the

SEE GO PINOYS A12

Gonzalez's gaffe may cost him his job

By Amando Doronila

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ compromised himself after he offered on April 22 to give P10,000 to each barangay captain in Iloilo City who could deliver a 12-0 vote for the administration's senatorial candidates in the May 14 election.

It was an act Gonzalez would soon regret. It could cost him his job. It has put Gonzalez's future tenure in jeopardy and has severely dented the credibility of his office.

ANALYSIS

It instantly sparked a political tempest and calls for his resignation or at least suspension in the closing weeks of the election campaign.

Worse, the office made in the hope of positive gain to win the electorate at all costs, has prompted the Commission on Elections to start an inquiry to see whether the government's highest judicial official has violated the law.

GONZALEZ'S ACT

WWF WARNING

Global warming threatens to sink half of Navotas

By TJ Burgonio

GLOBAL WARMING THREATENS TO submerge parts of Manila and wipe out entire islands, a conservation group warned, as it brought its campaign to combat climate calamities to the Philippines.

"The Philippines is extremely vulnerable in the ravages of climate change," the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) said. "Food and freshwater shortages, receding coastlines and an increase in political and economic turmoil is the bleak picture that climate change paints for the country."

(Unrevised story on Page 4A.)

Rene Tinal, WWF-Philippines climate change manager, said at a news conference on Thursday that a rise in local sea levels could inundate half of Metro Manila's coastal areas of Navotas and adjacent entire islands in the archipelago.

The WWF is now organizing task forces composed in the country to adopt energy-efficient saving measures in their operations to help in the global effort to cut emissions, the leading cause of global warming.

"We're talking to some corporations, large corporations. Yes, there are verbal commitments and we've seen some presentations," WWF marketing chief Imelda Reina told reporters.

She said the companies were mostly

GLOBAL A10

Mayor hurt, aide killed in fiesta attack

By Yolanda Sonda-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAN CARLOS CITY—IT WAS THE HIGHmoment of the fiesta, a new beauty queen was about to be crowned and Mayor Jesus Rotsello was greeting people when a gun pulled out from under the arm of the person who met him ended it.

The gun fired, Rotsello's aide, Eulogio Martinez, threw himself on the mayor to shield him, and was instantly killed. Two policemen and stampeded for cover.

The Saturday night attack amid the celebration inside the gymnasium in this city in Pangasinan left Rotsello and five other people wounded and stirred fears of more bloodshed with only about two weeks left before the nation goes to polls on May 14.

In other acts of violence, a village councilman was gunned down while looking inside his house in Malabon, while five others were wounded in a separate attack elsewhere in the province, also on Saturday night.

In Kidapawan City in North Cotabato, a congressional candidate of President Macapagal-Arroyo's political party Lakas-Kampi was killed inside her vehicle after a gun owned by her policeman-nephew accidentally went off, police said. (See story on Page A12).

The latest deaths brought to second 30 the number of people killed in violence since the start of the campaign period.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) not just on state Spain. A PNP officer told the Inquirer on Friday after two people were killed in a clash between rival political camps in Davao Oriental that the death toll at that point stood at 17. (See

PNP ON GUARD A12

Tacloban conjoined twins die

By Lolo B. Saisarria

THE LITTLE KIDDIE TOOT HAD JESUSmind Mary Grace and Mary Divine Asis for 16 days stopped beating at 10:30 a.m. yesterday.

The conjoined dicephalus twins were surrounded by their father, grandmother and an uncle in a room in the Philippine General Hospital in Manila where the end came, according to pediatric surgeon Dr. Bing Ingal.

"Doc, asta na po ba iAn that gone?" the father asked after the intensive touched to the twins' heart the final.

By then, the other member's for the twins' vital functions had begun losing and the latter breathing had stopped.

Asked if there was any reflection that the twins—born in Tacloban City on

TACLOBAN A12

FIREMEN spray chemicals down on a Cobra/UH-1H helicopter and a damaged motorboat in Cebu after the aircraft plunged onto a busy street in Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu. Nine people were killed in the crash.

Kite's string found entangled in rotor of PAF helicopter

By Jolene R. Balanban
Inquirer Visayas
and Nikko Dizon
in Manila

CEBU CITY—NYLON STRING FROM a kite was tangled in foam caused the Philippine Air Force UH-1 helicopter crash in Lapu-Lapu City on Saturday afternoon that killed nine people.

Lt. Gen. Roberto Tolentino, PAF commanding general, yesterday said it is media by telling that investigators found strands of nylon string, 2 millimeters in diameter, entangled in the rotor system of the downed aircraft.

Tolentino said there were no indications of pilot error or negligence. The engine did not stop but tail-rotors separated that the nose had stopped as the helicopter dropped, he said.

DETAILS STORY A12

US 5-star jails offer upgrades to convicts

SAN ILANA, CALIFORNIA —Anyone convicted of a crime knows a debt to society. Often enough, he pays it all. But a class of California cons willing to supplement that debt with cash for personal checks, pleased on finding that the time

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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Kapatiran admits chances dim but idealism still alive

By Cinnamon V Bagunu

THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL—ALL THREE senatorial candidates of Ang Kapatiran face defeat.

Scoring not more than 3.6 percent in major pre-election surveys, even the most optimistic in the party line seems to realize that Martin Bautista, Adrian Sison and Jesus Dureza Jimenez don't stand a chance in the May 14 elections.

"Medyo realistic naman (The election is uncertain)," Bautista admitted to the business set-up. "We're close to election day but the voters still don't know us."

He based his confidence primarily on his experience in campaign entries and Kapatiran's performance with the United Filipino Nationalist and Pulse Asia surveys that covered the first half of April.

In the 1998 rally, Bautista remained only 3.6 percent of the voters' likes, 2.2 percent, and Dureza, 1.4 percent. The Pulse Asia survey was just as discouraging: Bautista, 3 percent; Sison, 2 percent; Jimenez, 1 percent.

Unlike other candidates at the bottom of the surveys—who are still in denial—the three candidates know where they stand and the battle they are engaged in.

In this sense, Bautista's admission of lowering electoral debut shouldn't be construed as surrender.

To begin with, Bautista—a successful physician in the United States who moved back to the Philippines last year—said the campaign was never focused solely on winning in the May elections.

"This is a long and protracted struggle to put the country back on track," Bautista said.

When Kapatiran was established by a group of Jay Cortez Jacinto in 2004, the intention was clearly to initiate a new perspective in Philippine politics—one that would be centered on faith and morals. Hopefully, it would result in political reform.

From this concept of God-centered politics, the group hoped that the political system would heed it, and that politicians would turn into statesmen, and leaders would become genuine servants.

"We're successful in the sense that we've created an awareness that there are still people who have not lost hope in our nation," Bautista said.

Besides, Sison and Dureza have just many of them on the campaign trail—the softened hand working in the public market, a couple visiting a decent family despite ever-debilitating poverty, an ordinary man-to-man doing honest and dedicated work.

"We have to start somewhere," Bautista said. He began by plunging into Philippine politics, armed only with a clear sense of idealism.

"While on the campaign trail, I came to realize that corruption cuts across the whole spectrum of Philippine society," he said. "But I'm not backing out. In the contrary, our idealism has become stronger."

Prayer rally set

SOLIDARITY will hold a candlelight prayer rally instead of a mixing & election homecoming, from 7 p.m. at the Meditation Garden at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

Ang Kapatiran secretary general Brandy Bichara has invited the public to spread their prayer rally and if they could, to bring their own candles.

Initiated by an interfaith group, the program will include prayers and inspirational songs. There will be no speeches, he detailed that, no shouting, no violent language and no public disturbance, Bichara said.

RECOVERING
Looking wan, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo manages a wave after leaving Mass at St. Luke's Medical Center yesterday with members of the First Family. Arroyo has spent three weeks in the hospital following delicate open-heart surgery that has a 5-percent survival rate. PHOTOGRAPHER

Kampi bankrolls Joker bid to tune of P27M

By Cliff C. Cabucungcat Jr.

REELECTIONIST SEN. JOKER Arroyo is getting enormous help from President Macapagal-Arroyo's political party, Kampi, which has so far bankrolled half of the municipal administration senator's television advertisements.

According to Arroyo's ad agency, Double Spinnedda Philippines, the senator has so far spent P27.669 million on TV ads, "with an equal amount paid for by Kampi, the political party which installed Senator Arroyo."

Double Spinnedda disclosed this in a letter to the COMELEC and ABS-CBN television networks to dispel reports that Arroyo was the second biggest TV ad spender with P54 million, after fellow Team Unity candidate Prospero Pichay.

The agency said Arroyo, a human rights lawyer before he went into politics, had spent P16.309 million as of April 25.

Arroyo is entitled to 120 minutes of television airtime so as to individual candidate, plus a portion of the 120 minutes of airtime allocated to Kampi as a political party.

Being the only senatorial candidate fielded by Kampi, Arroyo can use up the rest for 120 minutes allotted for the party.

But Double Spinnedda noted that Arroyo could not use up the entire 240-minute allotment that he is allowed as he did not have the resources to do so.

On the 30-second ads, Arroyo claimed not to have spent a single centavo of his own money in his reelection bid, nor in previous election bids.

"I never spent my own money because the moment you do, you compromise yourself," he was told. "Talk lesser" on the TV website.

In an interview, Arroyo explained that he had always run as an independent candidate but that he joined Kampi after the Commission on Elections told him that he needed to be nominated by a major political party in order to be able to field watchers in the elections.

"I looked at the list of parties and I found that the Kampi president was Lito Villafuerte, a fellow Bicolano," he said.

"But little did I realize that I would be the only Kampi senatorial candidate and that means I'd be entitled to 120 minutes more TV time while others who belonged to the same party would have to divide among themselves the TV ad allocation," Arroyo said.

Slay suspect's kin fear violation of his rights

LAGARE SYQUIA'S RELATIVES of Jean Donald Uson urging prejudicial suspect in the killing of US Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell, aired their concerns over Dumagpas's lack of a lawyer, fearing the suspect's rights may be violated by his rights.

They voiced their apprehension following statements from police officials here that Dumagpas would be brought to Metro Manila today and would be presented to Philippine National Police Director Oscar Calderon.

Michio Lubrico Halawod, the Public Attorney's Office lawyer who assisted Dumagpas, said the hours at the area not aware of plans to bring him to Metro Manila.

Halawod said her services as counsel to Dumagpas were "only for the interview on Friday and Saturday" when police took down the suspect's out-of-court confession.

She said she represented Dumagpas after a policeman went to the PAO here on Friday and asked her to help the suspect during the custodial investigation.

Senior Supt. Pedro Garet, Baguio police director, allayed the fears of Dumagpas's relatives.

"Sir lawyer is still dormmy Halawod because her services are over since after the investigation," Garet said.

He explained that Dumagpas and his lawyer agreed with the steps the police had taken, including the suspect's trip today to PNP headquarters in Camp Crame.

"That was the order (to present Dumagpas to Calderon) given to me so I have to comply," he said.

Melvin Bisnar, Augusto Sevilla and Lawyer

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Actress and interior design consultant **Carmi Martin**, who has been one of the first few to try ReFirme, has nothing but praises for it. "I've noticed that as I get older, I get sags in my eye area and worse laugh lines. Even if my skin was okay, the droops made my face look tired. When I tried ReFirme, I was relieved it wasn't painful at all! I think I even fell asleep. The results were most noticeable on the 3rd day. As in it was really surprised! My laugh lines were lessened. Even the sags in my eye area – gone. And this was only after one treatment! So! I definitely recommend this to busy women who want an instant lift without the surgery."

Carmi Martin

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Putri Bokir

Image consultant **Putri Bokir** is ecstatic about ReFirme's results as well. "Wow, I was so impressed with ReFirme! I didn't feel any pain during the treatment. Plus I not only saw, but felt results immediately after! As in right after the treatment! My skin became firm and the laugh lines disappeared. When my friends saw me after the treatment, they asked me if I had Botox done or something. I told them about ReFirme and how much I loved it! I plan to make this part of my beauty regimen. Amazing! I'm totally satisfied."

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 30, 2007
10th Week of Easter
Plus 5

1st Reading: Acts 13:1-18
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. But the shepherd of the sheep enters by the gate. The keeper opens the gate to him and the sheep hear his voice; he calls each of his sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, rather they will run away from him because they don't recognize a stranger's voice."

Jesus used this comparison, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the gate of the sheep. All who came were thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will go in and out freely and find food.

"The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; but I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness."

Commentators

Now shame has drawn with the people in Jerusalem others he was taught that when God created it alone and that he was sent to preach. Others he did, those who listened were filled with the Spirit, as it had come when Jesus promised them this gift. The Gentiles too are called and blessed with repentance, life, and the gifts of the Spirit. All the world is to be one in Christ. We are not to interfere with God. We are all the sheep of his one flock and each of us is called by name. All are invited in, to be safe, to find pasture and to have life in its full. We belong in this flock. Do we follow the voice of the Shepherd and make sure that we are not interfering with God by our inclusion of others, our exclusions and traditions?

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Women reminded of day they got the right to vote

By Nikko Dizon

DID YOU KNOW THAT TODAY, APRIL 30, 26 women's suffrage [was] in the Philippines?

Election lawyer Romulo Macalintal, who handles poll cases for President Macapagal-Arroyo, wondered why the country's women's groups—whose issues are based on the most important of issues—were not celebrating this day on reelection week.

He recalled that 22 years ago, then-President Ferdinand Marcos issued Proclamation No. 2346 declaring April 30 of every year "Women's Suffrage Day" to enable Filipina women to "assess their advocacy and support for clean, honest and free elections and promote genuine people-their efforts towards this direction."

The country should give due recognition to the more than 300,000 Filipino women who voted in a plebiscite on April 30, 1937, to amend the Constitution and grant women the right to vote, Macalintal said.

Women in the Philippines began organizing as early as 1905 to demand their right to vote, a right denied them by the Malolos Constitution of 1899.

Up to 1920, the Constitutional Convention led by Claro M. Recto still opposed women the right to vote. Section 1, Article V of the 1935 Commission limited Filipinos' right of suffrage to male citizens.

Those who said that women should not be granted the vote claimed their area "is complete" demand for suffrage. Women's groups themselves, said that it would only disrupt family unity and plunge women into the complexities of politics."

Macalintal said that no petition to the delegates to the 1935 Constitutional Convention, women leaders asserted that suffrage was not a matter of specific numbers. "It is a right granted to every citizen and therefore cherished. It is not a matter of size. In a democratic government all qualified citizens, men and women alike, can and should make their valuable contribution in deciding what their community will undertake to do through its government, by what means, and to whom it applies its funds."

The women leaders had then asserted: "Under the law women suffer penalties, are summoned before the courts of law—issues they had no voice in making—and pay taxes. Democracy without representation is tyranny."

Macalintal said that a compromise was eventually reached.

He said that while the final version of Section 1, Article V of the 1935 Constitution limited the right of suffrage to Filipino males, it contained a provision saying that "the right to suffrage could be extended to women if, in a plebiscite which shall be held for that purpose within two years after the adoption of the 1935 Constitution, not less than 300,000 women possessing the necessary qualifications shall vote affirmatively on the question."

Commonwealth Act No. 34 was passed to hold the plebiscite on April 30, 1937. Female voters registered for the first time on April 30 and 31, 1937.

Thus, on April 30, 1937, on account of the heroic and dynamic struggle and fight for women's suffrage by women leaders, more than 300,000 women voted for their right to vote, Macalintal said.

"I wonder why it took a man to remember that women's day," he told the Inquirer.

Women's party-list group accused of being Palace front seeks apology

ONE OF THE MANY [illegible] groups accused of fronting for the Arroyo administration has likened its accusers to "school bullies" harassing newcomers to the May national elections.

Sultan para sa Kaunlaran (Babae Ka) seats the most prominent groups like Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis to task, and draw from the elections and issues a public apology for allegedly making the false accusations.

"These hand-picked organizations are like school bullies who always harass new students," Babae Ka president Ruth Dongeto said in a statement to the Inquirer.

The group was reportedly invented after Migrante International, Gabriela and Anakpawis released a copy of a Malacañang memorandum that they supposedly outlining how the Arroyo administration planned to field its own party-list groups.

Bayan Muna was not among the groups that made the document public, although it is aligned with Gabriela and Anakpawis.

Babae Ka—along with Agbap! Binnyag Gianan (Agbig), League of Youth for Peace and Democracy (Lypad) and Kalahi Advocates for Overseas Filipinos (Kalahi)—were mentioned in the document as among the groups allegedly being funded by the government.

"Babae Ka was never a Malacañang campaign," Dongeto said. "We will be critical of government policies when they are wrong as administration, unfriendly and antipeople but we will also be supportive of programs that will uplift the economic, social and political well-being of the people, especially of women and their families," she said.

Citing a television report, Dongeto said that the document supposedly coming from Malacañang's Office of External Affairs (OEA) was "already false."

In the document dated Oct. 16, 2006, OEA Assistant Secretary Rhonda Guillen reportedly informed President Macapagal-Arroyo about the creation of a "special consensus group" to assist presidential candidate [illegible] groups. Christian Esguerra

'Otap' doll is Pinoy 'Barbi'

THE DIFFERENTly abled children of the Naga City-based Help Learning Center (NSC) and the children at the Magsaysay Center (MSC) in Quezon [illegible], Albay are creating their own Pinoy Pinoy (Otap) dolls as part of the summer outreach program of University of the Philippines students and the YLC that visits [illegible].

The first workshop was held yesterday in Daraga, Albay, as part of YLC's environmental summer camp. The delegation will proceed to the MSC today to conduct a doll-making workshop with the differently abled survivors of Supertyphoon "Reming."

The activity is the second phase of the workshops originally dubbed "Barbing Pinoy for Real" held at the Naga Tamara Community Center [illegible]. 30 others LD students led by Act Worker professor Flordeliz May S. Bernas and Naga city officials, including Peace Officer of Social Welfare and Development [illegible] doll with life stories.

Among the dolls created in the Barbing Pinoy workshop was "Otap," by Delmo child in the LD delegation. Lipa Darey and LD professor Olga Arella. Otap became the name of Barbing Pinoy.

The activity is a collaboration between Ateneo Public Interest Law Center, Barbing Pinoy pioneers and the local government of Naga, Malaysia and Bataan. Interested parties may e-mail Mr. Ingalisbarbie@ateneo.edu or [illegible]@gmail.com or visit www.barbingpinoyphilippines.com.

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More RP coal plants to abet global warming–Greenpeace

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT WATCHDOG GREENPEACE has warned the Philippines that building more coal-fired power plants would only increase carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the country instead of mitigating global warming.

Greenpeace climate campaigner Jasper Inventor said the government plan to build nine more coal plants with a capacity of 2,000 megawatts would defeat the purpose of any bona fide action to address the dangerous warming of the climate.

He said this, and the failure of the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change to meet its 45-day deadline in coming up with an action plan, was "a sign of the government's lack of serious intent in addressing the problem."

"[The coal plants] will increase CO2 emissions in the Philippines by 12 percent," Inventor had said in an earlier interview.

CO2 emissions, according to scientists, are among the "greenhouse gases" that are contributing to increasing temperatures worldwide.

The plan to build more coal-fired plants, he said, was ironic because President Gloria Arroyo had ordered the newly created task force under Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes to draft an action plan that would reduce the country's carbon emissions. A renewable energy bill is also pending in the Senate.

"Right now, we seriously doubt the intentions of the task force. Until they come out with the action plan, we feel this is a farce," Inventor said.

Despite the avowed plan to stabilize or put a cap on CO2 emissions, the government is looking at increasing the share of coal, he lamented.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had indicated that the government would't abuse to deep coal as a major energy source.

Lotilla said the use of domestic coal was key to the government's long-term plan to attain self-sufficiency in energy, but said that it planned to ratchet on the importation of coal by 20 percent to 10 years, as it shifts to renewable energy sources.

Last year, coal accounted for 27 percent of the country's power generation mix.

"The Philippines can announce in 2007 to be spewing out about 74.2 million tons of carbon emissions a year. Southeast Asian nations, including the Philippines, are the third largest emitters of carbon among developing countries after China and India, according to Greenpeace.

Earth Day slay won't stop drive vs loggers

THE KILLING ON APRIL 22 OF AN environmentalist officer will not deter his colleagues from going after illegal loggers behind the demolition of the country's forests, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said yesterday.

Rudy Ambanguis was shot dead by an unidentified man in front of his residence in Gattaran City at the world Earth Day.

Ambanguis, 42, had been working as an undercover agent of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (Nantaf).

"Aside from his job now brought with danger but he was not intimidated. He can act he," Reyes said in a statement.

Reyes said he had warned Nantaf operatives that the illegal loggers would be backed by influential personalities "clever persons."

"And I stressed that we should not be intimidated," he said.

Reyes, whose request that Ambanguis be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani committee was granted, paid tribute to the officer who "worked quietly but successfully a great deal in the campaign against illegal logging."

He said Ambanguis had helped Nantaf arrest over 34,000 illegally cut logs worth more than P11 million since it was created in March last year.

"Up on the time of his death, he had distinguished himself as a special investigator of Nantaf," he said.

TJ Burgonio

For Pinay bar workers in Japan, safety not an issue

TOKYO—JUDITH Jessica Jan patrolled where she knew that Intrab ub her worker Jamie Blackmon had been killed and mutilated in a hostile attack that sent shock waves through Tokyo's famously safe bar industry.

Jan Blackmon's death did not stop the 33-year-old Jan from working as a hostess, a job that has spread of a lucrative income since the first came to Japan 17 years ago.

"I don't go out on dates with my customers," said Jan, who only gave her first name, at a "Philippine pub" in a decaying Tokyo suburb.

"If they ask me out, it usually makes me bring a friend with me," she said.

Blackmon, 27, disappeared in July 2000 while working as a hostess in Tokyo's seedy Roppongi district, hoping to earn quick money to fund a trip to Australia.

After seven months, with her photos pinned to poles across Tokyo, blackmon's dismembered body was found in a seaside cave in Misaki, 50 km southof Tokyo.

Life sentence

Wealthy businessman Joji Obara was indicted for drugging 83 young women and videotaping sex with them, including Blackmon. Sentenced to life in prison last week for the murder but he was acquitted in the Blackmon case due to lack of evidence.

Japan issued nearly 150,000 "entertainer" visas, long a convenient shield to bring in girls to work as bar hostesses, of the peak in 2004, of which 97.5 percent went to Philippine women.

The number plunged by more than 20 percent the following year, triggering protests in the Philippines.

Visa violations

Jan is encouraging her entertainer visa, while fellow Filipina Gina, 35, is on temporary release on immigration charges, a status that could lead to her detention at any time.

Emma Ena, 34, who frequents foreign hostess bars, said he did see think many of the girls felt threatened.

"There is no country that has the same high demand for hostess girls as Japan," he said. "Even if they are not smart, they can make a lot of money as long as they are a bit sexy."

Brenda Mage said foreign women found being a bar hostess a good deal—they earn plenty of money without having to engage in sex.

"Prostitution is not a prerequisite of this industry," he said.

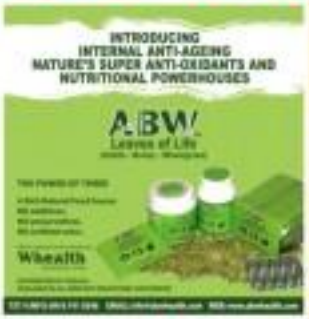
"They only chat, drink and sing karaoke with Japanese men."

Jan and Gina both said Japanese men often came off as perverts but were essentially harmless.

Asked what they would do if they were victimized, the two paused, searching the dance hall, revolving in the ceiling.

"I would probably talk to the owner first," Gina said, pointing to the bread. Told Japanese man at the counter. They said he made sure to drive them home after work.

"I don't want to go to a hotel with customers and make more money, that's up to them," the owner said. "But others they are here, I'm responsible for their safety." AFP



SC: No libel in probe papers

By Lala B. Salamanca

THE SUPREME Court has ruled that documents submitted as part of a preliminary investigation are considered privileged communication and cannot be used as a basis for a libel case.

The high tribunal issued the ruling upholding a 2000 decision made by the Court of Appeals pending a libel complaint against businessman Vicente Perez filed by Metro Corp. chair Nenita Abcarian.

In issuing the decision, the Supreme Court said the investigator that Perez submitted to the prosecutor as an annex in the estafa case he had filed against Abcarian was considered privileged communication.

While the doctrine of privileged communication can be abused, and in cases can lead to grave hardships, to allow libel suits to prosper strictly on the account will give rise to even greater hardships. The doctrine would result not in public policy which leads to the free and unfettered administration of justice. It is a rule applied liberally" the court said in its No. 20 decision.

In 1997, Perez sued Abcarian for estafa, claiming that the latter had swindled him of three million shares in Pure Crescent Corp.

Fraud case

While the case was undergoing preliminary investigation, Abcarian submitted to the Makati prosecutor's office a memorandum she carried a copy of Perez filing a case against Abcarian with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In the SEC case which Perez lost, he had accused Abcarian of defrauding him of his shares in Pure Crescent Corp.

Abcarian then filed a libel case against Perez on the following: 1) The SEC complaint in the memorandum was defamatory; 2) Perez had criminal intent of the memorandum; 3) Perez had malice and 4) the procedural rules of court to not shielding the memorandum as the affidavit of his original complaint.

Perez was initially ordered for libel by the Makati prosecutor's office in 1998, but he questioned the finding before the DOJ which ruled in his favor in 2000.

Withdrawal

The DOJ ordered the case be withdrawn, saying the memorandum was privileged communication. In 2001, the Makati Regional Trial Court also ordered the withdrawal of the libel case.

Abcarian then questioned the RTC's decision before the appellate court, which upheld the DOJ decision. He then elevated the matter to the Supreme Court, which ruled against him.

According to the Supreme Court, the memorandum had a privileged character, even if Philippine law does not categorically state that the doctrine of privileged communication extends to statements made in preliminary investigations.

The court also said the disputed documentary statements in the case fits the definition of privileged communication as proper, in the case of Perez's complaint, the statements were related to his complaint against Abcarian, it said.

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Officers backing Palparan thru text

CITY OF SAN PEDRO, Laguna – Several Army officers have started campaigning for the Bantay party-list group, whose nominee is retired Maj. Gen. Jaime Paredes, who had built a reputation as a fierce communist fighter in his 30 years in the military service.

The military is barred from engaging in partisan politics.

The role of Army commanders in the group's bid for a seat in Congress became evident from the text messages they have been sending to their friends, including investors.

A message from a top ROTC official based in Central Luzon used in Filipino: "Pagka ito nanalo, may alam na Congressional Voice for the party-list that aides with ordinary Voice for the Bantay party-list of Gen. Palparan."

The sender asked recipients to pass the message to "20 friends and relatives."

Palparan said he had not asked the military for help in his campaign. "If there do help me, they're doing it on their initiative," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

'Butcher'

Branded a "butcher" by left activists, Palparan had been blamed for the string of political killings and disappearances of militant and rights activists in region where he had been assigned until he retired in September 2006.

Maj. Gen. Jaime Bautista, chief of the 7th Infantry Division that has command over six Army units in Central Luzon, denied officers' involvement in the campaign, saying the military rejected "no such policy."

"We do not meddle in politics. Most probably, some friends of his are helping but the Unidad[?] organization is not involved," Bautista said in a phone interview.

Marcos loyalists

Palparan, 58, said Bantay's official twitter was "Tie to Marcos loyalists."

He said it was mainly aimed at helping the government implement its antiinsurgency program.

"The marginalized people are representing are those involved in securing communities like members of Bantay Bayan, Bantay Dagat, Bantay Hydria, victims of atrocities, which are surrendered, including those in the Cafgu Activated Reserve Battalion (Revolutionary Unit)," he said.

Bantay, he said, "does not represent soldiers."

He added, "But we will support efforts against the insurgency as we can help strengthen communities."

Meanwhile, in Bacolod City, Bacolod Mayor, the sister of the President's husband Mike Arroyo and Rep. Ignacio Arroyo in of Negros Occidental's 4th district, is campaigning for the Bantay party-list group.

The Manila-based lawyer joined Team Unity senatorial candidates in their recent visit to Bacolod and was immediately introduced to Negros Occidental barangay captains as a "true progressive."

Arroyo said on Wednesday that she was herself a member of Bayanga and that the group had yet to hold a convention to choose its nominees. Emerito Oyales, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Carlo P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

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INQUIRER

OPINION

A general's folly

IT SEEMS MAJ. GEN. IBN DOLOREINO HAS LEARNED the wrong lesson from his recent ordeal as Commander Abdik's hostage in, uh, involuntary guest. The commanding general of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command has pledged to continue his plan to conduct a voters' education campaign in Metro Manila despite reservations raised by election watchdogs and outright criticism leveled by the opposition and the media.

EDITORIAL

Last February, Doloreino and other members of a peace mission were taken hostage for two days by Ustadz Habier Malik, a renegade commander of the Moro National Liberation Front, in an MNLF camp in Panamao, Sulu. Both parties denied any hostage-taking, but both Malik and Doloreino, a Muslim convert, admitted that the general and his party could not leave the camp until certain demands were met. The demands, on closer look, were not entirely unreasonable. Malik seems to have been driven by frustration and a sense of urgency to use Doloreino's extended visit primarily as some sort of leverage to finally schedule a tripartite meeting between the government, the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Despite his modest demands or his arguably good intentions, Malik's actions were clearly a hostile act. Earlier this month, after Malik bombed a nearby Army position, the AFP wanted no time in turning their guns on him. The latest word (relayed by Doloreino himself, quoting sources within the MNLF) is that Malik was wounded in a recent clash.

But Doloreino, who is by all accounts an easy man to like, seems to be stuck in a Panamao frame of mind. His latest initiative suggests that he learned the wrong lesson from Malik: That good intentions by themselves justify the use of any form of violence.

Last Tuesday the general said he had "redirected our resources toward advocacy so that we can play an active part [in the May 14 elections]."

There he started a Covenant for HOPE (Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections) with the Commission on Elections, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and eight more signatories.

This week, he will start conducting voters' education workshops, "so we can communicate to the people our views and the voters are aware how to be responsible in really selecting the right leaders of our country."

On the face of it, the AFP-NCR Command's new initiative should help voters in Metro Manila reach better, more informed decisions. But in the context of other AFP initiatives and the more controversial political objectives of the Arroyo administration, Doloreino's voters' ed program should be met with the deepest skepticism.

It was under Doloreino that the AFP started deploying soldiers right in the middle of Metro Manila's shops, on the pretext of increasing the level of security preparations against terrorist attacks. The real reason, however, was to counter the influence of legal but Left-leaning party-list groups and militant sectoral organizations. (The President's favorite general, now retired Jovito Palparan, had termed this Marcosian template out put it to work in Central Luzon.)

It was under Doloreino's boss, AFP Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon, that the number of assassinations of leftist leaders and activists rose dramatically, and the strategy of deliberately confusing the line between legal organizations and underground movements became policy.

It was under Doloreino's boss' boss, President Macapagal-Arroyo, that the military became entangled, yet again, in accusations of systematic election fraud. As a spokesman of an anti-fraud watchdog group said, rather plaintively, the AFP does not have the "neutral machinery to monitor people on election fraud" considering the roles several generals played in the cheating in 2004." On the role played by Lupsi Cabinet member Hermogenes Ebdane, now merely the secretary of defense.

It would be the height of naiveté, therefore, to take Doloreino's initiative at face value. Even if his intentions were all good, he still would not be justified in forcing them upon the voters of Metro Manila. That, in fact, is the real issue. The AFP is determined to impose its new "role" in our elections regardless of what the public thinks. But unlike all of us hostages.

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Napocor coal purchase grossly overpriced

AS I SEE IT

Ninez H. Cruz

MORA A SUDDEN BREAKOUT STRIKE parts of Luzon last April 17, the National Power Corp. said it was necessary to jump-start electrical consumption and a shortage of fuel—principally coal—for several power plants. Now, the brown-out is a closet-up for another unbelievable price scam.

Napocor ordered five shipments of coal at $84 per metric ton and at the exchange rate of P50 to a dollar, or a total cost of P1,260.00 billion! Of course at the current exchange rate of P49.70 to a dollar, the actual price of the coal ordered coal would be $85.76 per metric ton.) What's wrong with that? Well coal brands, the regular price of coal is only $28 to $30 per metric ton. There is an overprice of $54 per metric ton. The 1,000 metric tons of coal overprice is $270 million, which will again be passed on to the consumers in their monthly power bills. Napocor justified the astronomical price, citing an emergency—a brief shortage.

But was there really an emergency? I don't think so. Napocor officials made up the cutback and fuel study of a "fuel shortage." Records show that Napocor had already secured in 2007 coal requirements since last year. It is only the month-end of the year. What happened to the planned supply for the whole year?

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the emergency purchase was unjustified because the source of coal supply for the power plants is a known barren. Esperon officials should know the coal supply sources.

The announced emergency publicity was used as justification for buying coal at not even a price is as fake as the reported Texas Utility swamped the international industry," Pimentel said.

Here's another giveaway. Napocor said that several of its power plants needed coal or were not generating as full capacity. Imagine Pagbilao, Sual, Masinloc and Mindoro power plants working one or two operating to full capacity all at the same time, allegedly because they were short on coal supply. Add the latest rumor of Napocor that its plans in Limay, Bataan, stopped, this while the power plant in Subic was used to operations. Do you believe that?

If true, then Gloria Napocor officials are grossly negligent and incompetent and should be fired. In the first place, they should have foreseen the higher demand in summer. The Department of Energy (DOE) should have foreseen the failure of Napocor to stockpile coal to meet a portion of the expected rise in power demand. This is incomprehensible and simple.

The other possibility is that the crisis was an official ploy to justify the emergency purchase of high-priced coal.

Here's another shot: Napocor awarded a congressional coal contract for five gasoline-Japanese firm ship is the maximum size of a vessel that can pass through the Panama Canal" adjustment as an Australian firm as $84 a ton. The contract was awarded to Sunnet Valley Coal Corp. Pty Ltd. via its local representative Monsanto for San Philippines AG. The $84/ton was a collated price by Napocor which is rendered to increase coal supplies in a contract awarded to Napocor's vice president and Bids and Awards Committee Chair Juan Carlos Guadamuz.

The tender was issued by Napocor on March 29, 2007. The award was made on April 2, 2007, just three days later. What speed, as announced in the Philippines whereas deals like this usually take many months, if not, through, bad luck!

Here's another strange part. The emergency order was made on March 16 and the award given on April 2, 2007. Yet the bonanza—the first manifestation of the emergency that the contract was supposed to remedy—arrived only on April 17, 2007.

Sens. Gregory Sergio and Rachael Lardo became suspicious and alarmed about the deal, apparent. As a result, he ordered Esperon to give him data on oil and coal purchases.

But let's assume there is really a shortage of fuel. Isn't this proof of incompetence? Napocor was only failed to make reasonable forecasts, it was failed to prepare contingency measures to meet sudden fuel supply increases.

Lone Bolinquinel, president of the Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC), operator of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), has admitted that the country has an energy reserve and is running "power passing." He said the generators should do this gradually in time. The Senate Development Plan has to be reviewed, he said, especially on the long-term supply.

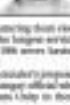
Napocor has been repeatedly ordered by the Presidential Energy to source their long-term power supply from cheaper sources. But Esperon has failed to deal with it. Napocor media deals actively defying this DOE order? Who could blame them? If they source into deals cheaper long-term contracts, they will lose millions of dollars in commissions (remember, these are still unofficial and not reported into their books). The more emergency purchase was priced at three times the normal price.

But the worst is not yet over for power consumers in the Luzon Grid as still plagued with unscheduled brown-outs due to the shortage of capacity in the provinces. Now the reason is feeling the crunch because of the shutdown of the Unocal natural plant in Cebu. The public will now have to cope more for its electricity because of Napocor's inefficiency and unimaginative.

Electricity prices will remain high three month because of the expected surge in demand due to the hot months. Demand will rise to 6,700 MW (the available capacity is only 6,500 MW) or higher. The April 17 increment caused sharp increase in WESM prices.

Nuts

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

"I DO NOT FOLLOW CONSPIRACIES," Bienvenido Rosal Gonzales after Maldeo Bello, the debayan candidate, proposed that the justice secretary go on leave for offering hostages ransom in Bello P10,000 to deliver a 12.5 tonnage of Team Unity in the ceremonial matter. That is the very concept that was used by Gen. Marcos. Gonzales' gen. orchard about "communists" and "citizens." Maybe because both words begin with "c."

He declares the entire reaction to his latest asset: saying, "There are many issues in life that are complex. There are many issues, there are other issues." He should know. This is a qualification for becoming an official in this government. The British government makes knighthood on its most outstanding subjects, the learned Philippine government confers honorary doctorates on its most outstanding subjects. In lieu of "Sir," a term she is "Dra."

Bello, well, that one is a veritable source, as in the food pillows, "has your opinion." He is faced by high-ranking officials, including a senator and he has dozens of books to show for it.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita himself unwittingly unwittingly to the situation. Who in gods in Bird not whether or not Gonzales's idiots was at times wrongdoing? "The Enrile thing is, I was about to tell you that maybe in any case the secretary of justice to give us an opinion on the matter because he is the government lawyer." Obviously he cannot use the dispute of Makapersons tragedy that underlie the dispatch economy on matters of law.

It is funny it is just so funny as the fact that the person to complain to about election irregularities is the one person who singularly wrecked the computerization of canvassing to a non-qualified bidder and to screwed computerized elections entirely—at the cost of several billions to the taxpayers it is just as funny as the 40th—whose current head honchos were exposed by its most principled members in the persons of Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan as having cleared quickly in the last elections—voting now dried indeed to carry out a political utilitarian aim.

It is funny it is just so funny as the fact that the person to complain to about election irregularities is the one person who singularly wrecked the computerization of canvassing to a non-qualified bidder and to screwed computerized elections entirely—at the cost of several billions to the taxpayers it is just as funny as the 40th—whose current head honchos were exposed by its most principled members in the persons of Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan as having cleared quickly in the last elections—voting now dried indeed to carry out a political utilitarian aim.

What's wrong with it, so-ought, is that Gonzales is only hoping. Gonzales himself says not so because he is not hoping wrong, he is merely hoping barangay officials. Or indeed merely rewarding them. Well, now! mind using your cousins, but not your own barangay officials! Gonzales is not, quite apart from being a relative of mine. On that ground alone, he is indictable for over-hoping. You hog the vote of just one town, you are vote-hoping.

What's the difference between Gonzales and Ermita accepting outside my crime or lessen its gravity, they seem only enable to grasp what is wrong with it. We're back to Bicol' time, lying, cheating, stealing are wrong only when you're caught. Then, you begin to think they are the most normal things on earth. Cheating in elections becomes par for the course, you wonder why anyone is bothered by it. GMA passes off calling Garci as a lapse in judgment, everything becomes a lapse in judgment. Remember when Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said? Of course GMA cheated, but everybody cheats!

That Gonzales thinks nothing of buying off Bello's barangay officials doesn't just suggest he is so unsympathetic enough to defy our law in order to serve. Though he has been called that, I completely disagree with the description. Arrogance, for all its perversity, implies assets. Gonzales is exquisite only of ineffectivity it suggests as well that he thinks buying barangay officials, if not buying them, is an perfectly natural as a lady's smile.

That is unjust to say that with that logic, Gonzales will eventually go so see the killings as being perfectly natural as the coming of night. But that is happening as we speak.

What can one say? There are many times. This is a many country.

The party-list experiment

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE PARTY-LIST EXPERIMENT STARTED WITH the second paragraph of Sec. 5, Article VI of the Constitution. It reads: "The party-list representation shall include such sectors as labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and such other sectors as may be provided by law, except the religious, elect sector."

Because it was meant to be an experiment, the Constitutional Commission allocated to the upcoming 10 percent of the seats in the House. The idea was that, if the system worked, it could be expanded as a larger proportion of the House membership. But if it did not work, the system could be totally scrapped (through constitutional amendment). We have not yet had a chance to examine the experiment, but it is now being engineered to death.

The purpose of party-list election was to give voice to the industrially voiceless in society. As the sponsors put it: "The idea of giving meaningful representation, particularly to the farmers and the workers, would fit into Commission's humble pursuit of extending protection to the interests of the underprivileged." The party-list system is meant to be formal legislative deliberations. Because representation is a necessity especially in democracies where the people are giving the democratic process another chance, it does not last choice."

In this way, the framers would find objectives to be implemented." There are two ways to express an dependency. Much of the debate on the party-list system revolved around the question of how many seats in the House, especially disadvantaged sectors of society, should be represented. One view was that national parties or organizations should be assured reserved seats in the House; another view was that they should compete in the party-list system just like any other party or organization.

The choice to give them reserved seats was borne of the assumption of the republican form of the sovereign secure to compete in the political process. In the end the Commission approved a compromise: For three consecutive terms after the ratification of this Constitution, one-half of the seats allocated to party-list representatives will be filled by the selected representatives who will be chosen "as provided by law."

This compromise recognized the handicap under which disadvantaged sectors operate, but at the same time it was meant to accelerate their integration into organizations that would be able eventually be able to compete in the regular party-list system. three consecutive terms after the operation of the system commenced. In the course, this would mean that by the election of 1998, the sectors would have to compete in the party-list system on the same footing as others.

In sum, therefore, Sec. 5 provides two regimes: a temporary regime of sectoral representation — for three consecutive terms — and a permanent party-list or proportional representation regime. The temporary sectoral representation regime was an answer to the recognized disadvantage of the marginalized sectors. At the same time it was a signal to these sectors that set the period of three congressional terms, they should prepare to compete with other organizations and traditional political parties in a system of proportional representation that would treat parties and organizations on the same level.

It is clear from the debates of the Constitutional Commission that those involved were for the disadvantaged sectors would only be during the first three terms. The long and the short of it, however, was that, after much debate, the idea of participatory reserved seats was rejected by a vote of 22 against 16. What was also approved was the compromise reservation of seats for these unspecified sectors.

In the face of all this, nevertheless, Justice Jeremiah Pangandiman concluded in "Ang Bagong Bayani" that all the 50 seats, and not just 25, had been reserved for the marginalized sectors, and not just for those consecutive terms but forever.

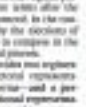
When the dissenting opinion of Justice Hilario Davide pointed to what the Record of the Constitutional Commission observed, Panganiban remarked that the Commissioners "were not infallible only when the text of the Constitution is not clear. For him, the text — in spite of the specific three terms and 50-percent limitation — must clearly say for 25 only but for 50 seats, and not for three terms only but forever. Effectively, he declared the phrase "for three consecutive terms after the ratification of this Constitution was added by mere ... " Indeed, after such interpretation, and only after such interpretation, the new decision dissolved the Bangalisan I case.

Is this objection to the current controversy? Very much so. Either the Congress for those who do not represent the underprivileged sectors is being unfair to those reserved seats. And the Comelec influence to develop who they are!

The Supreme Court does and interesting article in being disputed by someone who wants to get in as sectoral representatives. The majority held that party-list nominees "must represent marginalized and underrepresented sectors."

We really need to have a good, hard look at the current party-list controversial system.

A thousand pesos for my vote



KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalbran II

IF SAID TO BE FIVE HUNDRED PESOS, BUT now the ante has been upped. No, this is no vote-buying but a more clever and definitely subtler ploy to engage voters' support—a scheme cooked up by the local politicians' "creative minds in the know."

Here, in his last several rallies—a head-start—this politician dynast has sent in all-paid-out deckers by wide margins, purportedly because of his "magic" with the band. The guy has very few points, if at all. If he had ever fought exam, very few will remember him as a topnotcher in the bar.

The truth is, his dirty tricks are designed to appeal above board. An example, in this election, which is very simple, the politician dynast pays 10 persons of the voters in each barangay with a packet of rice and a kilo of sugar. It makes no sense to say that the voters in each barangay will be completely "informed." The "magic" man knows. And then does not yet intend to "narrow" program to his other barangay chiefs.

All told, thirteen barangay heads, but the scheme is not yet complete. Each of it is counseled under a false veneer of legitimacy. How some the public don't suffer do not see this? It is said that he is able to cut not see just 10 persons but more than 20 persons of all governmental contracts, most of which are overpriced and substandard in quality, paying his all-time favorite. Obviously through a rigged bidding process.

This is only one of the political dirty tricks that a "consistent" accountability system," organized in the guise of a people's group, is said to have. They will have to contend with, thanks to Municipalities Tal (We are neighbors!), the movement was inspired by a similar group from famed electoral movement organized in Bambanog Mirage, under the guidance of a certain Bishop Rodolfo Iglesias.

The group's explanation of value to be had begun in its previous post could not have come at a better time. Cagayan de Oro had so much money, many bribes, and this was probably the reason both the church groups and the citizenry were powerless in resisting this dynast's clever ploy in

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Is labor export policy good for RP's development?

COMMENTARY

Ernesto M. Pernia

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH HYPE ABOUT THE surge in remittances. It has become the prime, if not the only, factor to attract inflow of capital and offered in general as a key indicator of the economy. These positive outcomes have encouraged the government to push further its labor export policy in the sense, for instance, of declaring that overseas employment should be "super market" for employment in advanced countries.

In 2000, the total amount of OFW remittances was officially recorded as $3.2 billion, just above 10 percent of the GDP. The Philippines is now the fourth largest recipient of remittances in the world, after India and Mexico, and the highest where remittances are measured as a ratio to population, GDP and exports.

What are the pros and cons of international migration and the manipulation of the human capital as can be gleaned from international literature and an analysis of Philippine data?

Because international migrants typically are among the better educated and experienced workers in the labor force, emigration or departure of such workers in a disruption of the economic activity. Labor market outcomes depend on the composition of emigrants and the nature of labor markets in terms of flexibility, segmentation and rates of wage and salary adjustments.

Another important effect of migration is on the quality of goods and services, reflecting the quality of replacement workers. A deterioration in quality would not be minimal. Such is apparent, for instance, in the health sector, where the quality of services in the Philippines as a consequence of the departure of skilled or professional workers (nurses and health workers), however, the decline in service quality could also be partly due to diminished teaching effort of public servants.

Some empirical studies show that while migrants are typically well-educated, migration does not take away a very large share of a country's best. Only, however, when the migration tends to a big extent loss of highly-educated persons. Several studies, like in at least a probably not an established factor as direct net compensating benefits such as remittances and other beneficial links that the emigrants maintain with the home country plus the home-migrant ties.

The economic consequences of remittances can be significant for the Philippine levels. In the household level, receipt of substantial portion of migrant workers' earnings is expected. The remittances serve to enhance family income. Whether they represent a net increase is debatable, given the tendency of remittances to reduce their work effort. For instance, though, it seems clear that recipient families are better-off with, rather than without, the remittances.

At the community level, inequality and poverty are exacerbated, although the remittances seem to spur the new richer families that are in the major society. Nonetheless, the creation of jobs and trading opportunities often results from investments and greater demand for goods and services, with the overall impact on the community being positive.

At the macroeconomic level, remittances have become a major source of foreign exchange, especially for countries plagued with fiscal deficits, external debts, persistent trade imbalances and severe foreign exchange constraints. They can change inflows, however, may exert upward pressure on prices, requiring skillful monetary management. Moreover, these inflows may spur a real appreciation of the exchange rate, thereby contributing to the development of export and import-competing industries. Further, the remittances windfall may dampen the urgency for policy reforms and hence government, while falling the domestic into complacency.

An analysis of Philippine data shows that remittances contribute significantly to poverty alleviation, as reflected in higher family spending on food and education by around 40 percent of beneficiaries. On the other hand, it is also the reflection of other variables including physical infrastructure and human capital in the regions. This beneficial effect does consistently up to the fourth quartile, from poorest to richest. But the richest 20 percent is the surprising given that the richest 20 percent of families, more likely, do not have members working abroad (overseas Filipino workers) or receive best remittances.

By and large, the benefits and limitations appear to benefit households, communities and the macroeconomy. They alleviate poverty, contribute to consumption development and finance fiscal and trade deficits and debt.

But there are also the negative costs. Migration to and from OFWs and their families or those members and other social costs. It is also subject to geopolitical circumstances and global market developments. Moreover, migration arguably causes brain drain and contributes to the erosion of the country's human capital requirements for its long-term development.

Meanwhile, the remittance bonanza makes it convenient for the government to skirt the difficult task of policy reforms that are needed to improve the performance of the economy.

Should the government indefinitely carry on with its labor export policy and keep its economy dependent on remittances? The country would probably be better served if the government instead focused its efforts on creating the conditions for a rapid and sustained growth path, as did South Korea and Thailand during their labor export phases in the 1970s and 1980s. A robust domestic economy would mean working abroad as option — not a necessity — for Filipinos.

Ernesto M. Pernia is professor of Economics, University of the Philippines, Diliman. This text is based on his UP School of Economics Perspectives Paper UPSE/Study 2000-2.

A sense of shame

FIRST OF ALL, I WISH TO THANK OUR READERS FOR THE kind notes they have sent regarding a number of columns written during the past few months. I don't get to read them right away since most of my personal mail bags are sent I explain. They are gratifying. Most touching are the kind-written notes which are much appreciated.

* * *

The longest note I received was on Fr. Ed Bonilla, the former parish priest of Gumpas, Tarlac, who is running for governor of the province, and from what I have personally witnessed and observed, never was I told how wrong. The people of Bamban, perhaps one of a series of drama, are calling to support.

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

One Bamban testimony in what may be the most significant social declaration in the history of this great province.

In a letter which I attended two weeks ago, the cultural friends were all lumped up by the choices that were available to them in the May gubernatorial elections. One described things in the following manner: a starting point and a queuing-up thing. Another characterized their situation as being between the devil and the deep blue sea. So a province that has produced so many of our heroes—and also a number of our books—is in the moment of such. With the power of history, misery and more misery for allowed to domination the provincial leadership for more than a decade and, of course, the presence of bad outrage and state of shame, what consider who will restore honor and dignity to the affairs of government?

I asked my cultural friends if they could overcome the "one-horse-town" and choosing that have gubernatorial candidate from elevated campaign in recent years. They gave me the impression that they were prepared for the worst and would do everything necessary to ensure clean and fair elections. It is, as the lawyers may pretend one, an entirely all-volunteer operation with the involvement of people from all levels of society in the province of Pampanga. As a matter of fact, if Fr. Bonilla, it would remind the rest of the country of this old saying: "for will to succeed, it is enough that the good do nothing," or something to that effect. And so the nation will be watching closely what happens in Pampanga on May 14 as one of the most authentic and educated registries of our democratic processes.

* * *

Much of our hopes for clean and peaceful elections are in the hands of Defense Secretary Fortunato Elaman and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon. If we go by past and recent events, we have reason to be hopeful. In the case of Secretary Elaman, he was linked with to the disappearance of Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano after the 2004 presidential elections. The Singapore government provided vital information that Garcillano had exhibited the video taken surreptitiously in the Garcillano's residence claimed that he had always been in the country although the combined resistance of the left and PNP proved insufficient to locate him.

In the case of General Esperon, his role in the 2004 elections was to ensure massive fraud. The Hyatt 10 tapes and text and others of the same but the minister in which the Macapagal Report was released created more doubts and raised more questions in the minds of a skeptical public. To this day, the Macapagal Report is considered highly classified and has not been made available to the people. The latest public survey on presidential candidate gave Pampanga a four-time lead. This should ring alarm bells as we move closer to election time.

Incidentally, last Saturday in the Navy Golf Course, in a brief exchange with Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, he reiterated his concern for the safety and security of people in Mindanao. He asked why it was necessary to bring in more troops when Mindanao remains the center of conflict operations. Interestingly, I was reminded of the recruiting program of the old Metrocom press to the declaration of martial law in this zone, opposition leaders like Mitch Espino were enabling about what was happening in Mindanao and Sulu as Pampanganing. Those who would later surface in the segment of security forces talked to implement martial law, particularly in Metro Manila. The concern of Senator Biazon should not go unheeded. Continued vigilance by the public we pay for our freedom.

Of course, the one statement that should invariably be a source of confidence in any election is not write home Commission on Elections. Unfortunately its integrity remains under a deep cloud of suspicion given the Supreme Court findings in the Ignacio Bautista case involving the Comelec's purchase of machines that were not delivered on time. It is now up to us to refresh the memories of our readers, the Supreme Court in a decision penned by then Associate Justice Serafin Bengzon, declared that "the illegal, imprudent and hasty actions of the Commission have not only destroyed legal and judicial safeguards but have also placed in serious doubt upon the poll body's ability and capacity to conduct automated elections."

Considering the findings of the Supreme Court on the actions of the Comelec, why should the public have any confidence in the Comelec's ability to conduct any kind of clean, honest, automated or manual?

* * *

Reader Saul Alcaraz wrote, asking for clarification on the imposition of the 12 percent VAT in connection with the senior citizen discount. Unfortunately, the examples I gave in my May 1 column were not clear. I will, therefore, try to make the conclusion in this manner. I would like to inform our senior citizens of an effective communication which I received from the Department of Finance.

In reply to my March 12 column, Finance Undersecretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho wrote: "We understand that you only based on your personal experience, there is no uniform manner for imposing the 20 percent senior citizens discount in the (restaurant) bill. Administratively, businessmen establishments granting discounts have not been made aware of the proper manner of computing the VAT on any so-senior citizens due to the absence of an appropriate regulation.

"The wish to inform you that in relation to this, the BIR recently issued Revenue Regulations No. 1-2001 (RR 1-2001) amending RR 4-2000 by adding a new Section that clarifies the basis of computation of the VAT on the sale to senior citizens. That VAT is applied after the discount as shown below.

Amount of sale (without the VAT)	P100
Less: 20% sales discount	(20)
VAT sale	80
Plus: 72% VAT (based on P80)	20.60
Total amount to be paid by senior citizen	P99.60

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NEW

Garglol

GSIS merely cruel to elderly or using pensions for polls?

LETTERS

MY MOTHER USED TO BE A PUBLIC SCHOOL teacher in Ilocos. She retired from government service on March 23, 1953. She opted for the pension, instead of the lump sum. In 1968, she started receiving her monthly pension through the Philippine National Bank (Pilanges, Ilocos). She opened a savings account there. The setup went on smoothly until last year (2006)—when she was required to appear at the GSIS office in Legazpi City, obviously to prove to the GSIS that she is still alive.

Legazpi City is approximately a two-hour ride from Ilocos. She is now 75 years old and diabetic. She's having difficulty boarding and getting off buses and buses. Someone has to accompany her on the trip to Legazpi. After the long trip to Legazpi, it is difficult for her to get up from her seat. She could trip down the sidewalk or corridor if there are too many people rushing about. She feels dizzy whenever her blood sugar count goes up or goes down.

Last February she was again unable to get an e-Card, as she wasn't receive her much-delayed monthly pension for January 2007, as she was told. We had to rent a jeep from Ilocos, Ilocos, to Legazpi for P500 because she firmly insisted the pension for her humiliation (sardonic, although the amount is no more than a monthly supply of medicine. Can't the GSIS people imagine the trouble we had to go through? After a long wait at the long line of old women, she was made to come back on Feb. 16 because the wife No. 7458. So when will she get her e-Card and pension? In March, April or never? When pump we stop kidding? My mother was dedicated to her profession and lived on honor title.

I understand that the GSIS is mandated and means to serve its members. But an SSS me... claim is not even available in Malaga. It's only available in Lipa and Legazpi. Can't the GSIS use the discretion it is "outstanding" of the old? Why the silly attitude? Can't the GSIS be more flexible in the implementation of the e-Card requirements? What the GSIS members are asking for is their money. Why is the GSIS making it difficult for them to get what is due them? Or is there some deliberate effort to delay the pensioners so that they can't be used as the occasion for administrative candidates in the coming elections?

Why can't GSIS president Winston Garcia deliver immediate justice for the benefit of pension-deprived, living pensioners and GSIS beneficiaries?

—RIS. NIDIA S. ARSOLIS,
2061 Inarawan Sta. de Guadalupe,
Guadalupe, Makati City

Marcoleta not nominee of original Alagad

IN ITS APRIL 23 ISSUE, THE INQUIRER REported that Alagad's nominees are Nicholas Maravilla, Alberto Alaban Sergio Manzano, Amparo Cabiling and Rodolfo Mendoza.

The fact is, the Comelec has yet to rule on our petition to throw away the illegal certificate of nomination filed by Maravilla, Alagad's nominee in the 13th Congress. The two members of the original and legal Alagad are: Diogenes Cudiamat, Jerome Adonis, Eric Ibarra Jr., Fanny Amante and Reil Encinares.

Alagad expelled Maravilla in 2004 after he refused to respect its basic principles of transparency, democratic consultation and accountability. Subsequently, the party-list group filed a petition for Comelec to affirm Maravilla's expulsion and removal from the House of Representatives, but the poll body ruled that it is the House Electoral Tribunal that has jurisdiction over our petition. We appealed the Comelec ruling to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court dismissed the petition due to the failure of our counsel to comply with the technical requirements for filing.

The issue before the Comelec now is: Which of the two nominees of the real and legal Alagad or Maravilla's—should be recognized? As in the other cases involving party-list disputes, the Comelec is expected to issue a ruling based on its reading of Alagad's constitution and by-laws.

Maravilla insist that 1, Alagad's founding president, have resigned and that his group has the majority in Alagad's executive committee. But to cannot show any formal letter of resignation from me, the claim of majority is not supported either by Alagad's constitution and by-laws, which require that the executive committee members should also be officers of Alagad. The designation of Maravilla's nominees to their official posts (as chairmen of various committees) were not completed as the such executive committee meeting was marred and interrupted by an altercation between Maravilla and me.

Despite the internal problems, the original Alagad continues to grow in 2004, it had barely two members in the National Urban Peace Advisory Council; today, it has 12; from zero in the National Council of Workers, the party now has 13 credible leaders, each one with a following and network of influence in various cities and municipalities across the country. Recently, several evangelical pastors with some 200 affiliate local churches expressed their support for Alagad. Groups identified with the Protestant as well as the opposition are also supporting the original Alagad.

This is the second time that Alagad is facing a **blatantcing** (sacked) **servants**. Our chances bounce reminds of the past three party-list nominees) are not intimidated by Maravilla's display of money and influence. In the words of Lina Antonio, our vice president for Luzon: "We have a just cause, and we fully trust that ... in the end, right will prevail over might."

—DIOSDADO S. IBARRA,
founding president,
former representative, 11th Congress,
42 San Vicente Ext., Salitpaan,
Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City

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Across the NATION

Comelec blunder seen in Nueva Ecija

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—LACK OF FAMILIARITY as a result of tapping security forces outside of Nueva Ecija was seen as the main reason for the clash between groups of bodyguards of candidates belonging to rival camps in the province.

Gov. Tomas Mamaradlo Jr. said he is running for governor, and the Commission on Elections tapped soldiers and policemen from the regional mobile group (PARC) who are not known in his area of operation in the province.

"Hindi kasi magkakakilala ang mga sundalo dyanda. Akala nung mga magkabanggaan sila (The security details do not know each other. It is highly probable for them to clash)," said Jaoni.

Prior to the decision of the Comelec to deploy 350 more soldiers and policemen to Nueva Ecija, no clash had been reported between rival candidates.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Jr. has allowed Gov. Tomas Joni (2) to retain administrative control over the provincial government following reports that the Comelec also wanted to take over the province's daily affairs.

The governor subsequently supported the plan to leave the running of the province's day-to-day affairs to the Comelec.

In his visit to Nueva Ecija on Friday, Director General Gene Cabrinha, Philippine National Police chief, said the PNP would punish the policemen found to have violated rules of engagement.

"Sir nauna dyo pulis dun (the full might of the PNP will fall on those who will be found to have violated the rules of engagement in this case)," Cabrinha said.

Residents and officials in Nueva Ecija said the clash between the bodyguards of Joni mayoral candidate Antonio Inquierd and another similar, Baltazar said.

The night fever, which intended to honor Supt. Gelor Eleazar, continued to gather momentum of investors on Sunday.

Alabanza said the bullet holes on the vehicles...four cars shattered, pole and four on fourth-car—have been documented.

Baltazar corrected reports that Rep. Rodolfo Antonino on Thursday night) have been poisoned and neither was murdered in a spate of ironed and prosecution.

Religious and civic groups have said committing warring candidates to sign separate covenant may prevent the resolution of violence.

Police investigators on Saturday tested for gunpowder traces the 30 policemen involved in the shootout between supporters of Inquierd and Antonino on Thursday night in Cabiao.

Two cops, a candidate for councilor and a policeman, were killed while 12 others, including Inquierd's son, were hurt in the gunfight.

The Task Force Joni retrieved the policemen's firearms for ballistic test, according to Chief Supt. Roland Balmian, Central Luzon police director. The policemen were assigned to Inquierd and Antonino.

Under investigation are four members of the SWAT who operated in the camp Hamiyalan at the expense of detention following the sighting of armed men in a blue van that stopped near the campaign rally there.

Also under investigation are four troopers from the provincial mobile group (PMG) and two policemen from the police security personnel officer who were all assigned to Inquierd.

Baltazar said the police's crime laboratory was expected to release its findings on Sunday.

"Somebody had an ruby finger and we would like to know who that was," he said.

Who gave the order to fire was another matter, Baltazar said.

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They may be assured because aside from sending in fresh troops, the Comelec has taken control of security in the province. Deputy Director Jose Melchor Piñgul, Inquierd Central Luzon.

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'Jueteng' operations thriving in Sorsogon City

By Bobby Q. Labajo
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SORSOGON CITY—JUST HOW do police act on citizens' calls about "jueteng" operations here?

The Inquirer, along with local media practitioners, shared the experience on Saturday.

After documenting operations of the illegal numbers game only about a kilometer away, they proceeded to the city police station at around 10:40 a.m. to immediately report the case.

Senior Insp. Nonito Belando, the deputy chief, wanted to know more—the exact location, the actual activity happening in the area and the number of persons present. After about 20 minutes, the wounded Theopolis chief seemed sure and that the report must be for immediate the provincial director.

Only after the media learned that action should be taken did belando send a text message to his superiors. He also referred the report to police informants 2, which has jurisdiction over the area.

The Inquirer also sent a text message to Insp. Ferdinar Argarin, the city police chief, but got no reply.

Lunch time

Fernando said she had instructed a certain Inspector Benavente, who is in charge of the substation, to dispatch a team without giving any detail about the "jueteng" to catch it. It was already 11:30 a.m.

When the journalists called up the substation, they were informed that Benavente had gone home to take his lunch.

Some noncommissioned officers on duty were very apologetic. They said they could not just act—even if they wanted to—without an order from superiors.

At 12:05 p.m., Belando informed the media that the provincial director had responded to her text message and that he ordered the city police in Bacon team to respond to the report. In the meantime, the team was assembled but still had to fetch Benavente to comply with a standard operating procedure on the presence of a commissioned officer during the operation.

It was already 12:15 p.m. when the policemen reached the area. The bet collectors or "kabo" were no longer there—as expected. The draw was done before 12 noon, a source told the Inquirer.

Some evidence of a jueteng operations in the area were still left. Here—the "paquitos" or pieces of paper containing the numbered bet of bets, jueteng tallies and draws.

Evidence

A stack of paper was still used during in front of the house. Police retrieved more papers from the ordinance pile.

Concesio Bunal, the house caretaker, said she was out and had no knowledge of what had happened. She admitted that jueteng operations were running her house and that it was her husband's field there.

Antonio Sintiscan, news director of ABS-S, suspected that the delay in police response to the media's call-for-help was part of the operation's time to wrap up their activities.

A week ago, the incoming police regional director, Senior Supt. Rufus Rodriguez, ordered a crackdown on illegal gambling, especially jueteng, in Bicol. Today, the illegal numbers game is still very much in operation and hasn even gained more areas.

Sigi, Illustre Brot, chief of the Bicol police community relations office, said Sir's directive was relayed right after he assumed office on April 12.

Jueteng operator

According to sources, Estrogan was the boss in the jueteng, run by one Leroy Lim. Operators in Casamiro Sorsogon are reportedly being handled by Annie Lee and in Casamiro Sur, by one Ringel and Nicolas Sibbaen in the Naranzada area where four draws are held down the day.

Bicol coordinated the protection of the illegal numbers game in some parts of Albay, especially Camarines town.

The operators earn at least P1.5 million daily for these "jueteng" draws in Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon, according to conservative estimates.

A police source said the operators give regular "lagay" or "pasalubong" to top police officials, who receive payoffs of P500,000 to P1 million per month, depending on their position.

Peace covenant in Laguna

SAN PABLO CITY—ELECTION candidates here and in the chief congressional district signed a peace covenant before a huge audience on Saturday night at the city plaza.

Facilitated by the religious sector, lawyers, civic groups, academe and other sectors, the candidates' forum gave equal time to them to present their platforms and plans on the economy and poverty, peace and order, job opportunities and other issues.

The facilitators saw to it that every candidate would not touch on personal or derogatory matters. The candidates were asked to speak on their qualities and personality as well as the positions they were aspiring for.

The signing of a covenant for a peaceful, clean and honest elections on May 14 highlighted the meeting. It was participated in by among other candidates, incumbent and last-termer Rep. Dionisio Ramos, who is running for city mayor; incumbent Mayor Vicente Amante, and a third mayoral candidate, Alfredo Cuevas.

Bishop Buenaventura "Boy" Argosino, who is running again, was present, together with six other candidates for the same congressional seat.

The forum organizers include the San Pablo Diocesan Social Action Center, United Seniors Council, San Pablo Bar Association, MSC Institute of Technology, Gawad, Rotary Luisa and Apoa, Inc., Alpha Phi Omega University, Free Association Master and the YMCA.

Rosendo Pontis, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Palawan execs oppose Comelec control plan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—POP Palaweno and city officials in a rare show of unity expressed opposition to plans to put the province and the city under the control of the Commission on Elections.

In a statement, Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn said he and other officials led by Gov. Joel Reyes and Rep. Mitos Mitra condemned the Comelec plan as "baseless and totally ill-advised as it places the peace and order situation in the province and the entire tourism industry in jeopardy."

In a press conference, they said the Comelec plan was contrary to the actual situation and adversely affected the province's tourism industry during the peak season.

"Everything is peaceful and orderly" in Palawan and Puerto Princesa, the officials said.

They cited recently drawing that after the nomination of democratic elections in 1986, elections in Palawan and Puerto Princesa had been orderly and peaceful.

"The Comelec will be committing a great disservice to the people of Palawan and Puerto Princesa and their foreign and local investors and, in particular, to the local tourism industry," the statement said.

Reyes also declared full support for the candidacies of Mitra and Hagedorn, who are both reelectionists.

Reyes personally manning campaigned in the May elections.

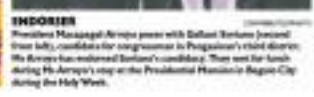
Sen. Raul Roco's Partido ng Tao mayoral candidate Eduardo Modiano said he was behind Barsaza to place the city under the control of the Comelec.

The retired top police officials said his group was lobbying for the Comelec control to have credible and peaceful elections.

"We were assured the elections would not be powerful, credible and clean," Modiano said.

Hagedorn, in a political ad running in local radio, said that any violence during the election period should be blamed on his rival, who, he alleged, had been recruiting "goons."

The mayor earlier opposed Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos' chances in the May 14 polls, together with Reyes. Teja, was among the positions declared to be wins of concern because of "intense political rivalry." Within report from Robert Regalado, Inquirer Southern Luzon



INDORSER

President Macapagal-Arroyo poses with Gallant Soriano [second from left], candidate for congressman in Pangasinan's third district. Ms Arroyo has endorsed Soriano's candidacy. They met for lunch during Ms Arroyo's stay at the Presidential Mansion in Baguio City during the Holy Week.

FOLLOWERS

An elderly couple volunteer their services for the campaign of Fr. Ed Panlilio, who's running for governor of Pampanga against two candidates identified with theft of public funds and illegal gambling.

Bet for governor accuses De Venecia of betrayal

DAGUPAN CITY – ARCHON EDGAR LABRADO accused Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. of betrayal for allegedly campaigning for his political opponents in the gubernatorial race in Pangasinan.

"Imagine, I am the official candidate of the [administration Lakas-CMD] party but [De Venecia] is endorsing a different candidate. He is now the president of the party," Labrado said.

De Venecia denied Labrado's accusation, saying the province is a free zone "because all of the gubernatorial candidates belong to the administration coalition."

"I am campaigning for all of them," De Venecia told the reporters.

Labrado is facing Dr. Jamir Eloise Agbayani, wife of outgoing Gov. Victor Agbayani, who is running as an independent candidate in a three-cornered gubernatorial fight due to Lakas-Kampampilipino Rep. Amado Espino Jr.

Espino has been endorsed by the National People's Coalition and the Bukidnon ng Muslang Pilipino (Bampi), both allied with the administration.

Labrado said in De Venecia's service in the province's fourth district, the Speaker had been asking the people to vote for Agbayani.

De Venecia is running for reelection in the district against Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim of the opposition PDP-Laban.

The fourth district is composed of this city and the towns of Mangaldan, San Jacinto, San Fabian and Manaoag. Towns in Dagupan, being an independent component city do not vote for a governor.

Labrado also said De Venecia had supposedly instructed a mayor to distribute Lakas-CMD sample ballots with Agbayani as the candidate.

"No, I did not do that," De Venecia said.

He said Labrado stained him as his bosses have used "his added line any help."

"I even assured him that I will help him," De Venecia said.

Labrado also said De Venecia has been applying "all sorts of pressures" on him even before he filed his certificate of candidacy.

"He had asked me to withdraw, giving the alibi that Eloise might win if I did not withdraw," Labrado said.

But Labrado said he was satisfied by De Venecia's endorsement of Agbayani. Gabriel Cordilleras, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Pichay claims he got backing of Isabela for being an Ilocano

SEE PROMISES PICHAY JR. YESterday claimed receiving the endorsement of leaders from Santiago City in Isabela province to support his campaign for

a Senate seat.

In a statement, Pichay said the support became evident during the Pro Piday Citizens Day passed through Santiago City during its stop at Northern Luzon.

Pichay said the support came as a result of him being an Ilocano.

Pichay, the statement said, revoked registered his Pro Piday Movement as the Ilocanos and Ilocanos' representative to serve as a vehicle for his legislative agenda of reviving nationalism and pride in Philippine products.

New girl for Nograney

MACE, Davao Oriental—Senior Opposition (SO) senatorial candidate Benigno "Ningoy" Aquino III, who has remained a bachelor, admitted here he was courting another woman, but preferred not to disclose it in public.

While his sister's [actress Kris] love life is like an open book, only two women were prominently linked with the 47-year-old "Ilocano representative in the past.

They were TV hunk Enrico Escobar and Broadcaster Jessica Soho.

"Yes, I'm courting someone now," Aquino said.

No outage in Cebu

CEBU CITY—Cebu would have a stable power supply during the May 13 elections, according to power officials.

National Transmission Corp. (Transco) Cebu spokesperson Jun Yap said the independent power producers and private distributors had given assurance of adequate power supply on election day.

Yap said the Task Force Halalan, headed by Crispin Lamayan, Transco assistant vice president for network operations in the Visayas, has been created for this purpose.

20 bets get NPA letters

ROXAS CITY—More than 20 local candidates in Capiz received letters allegedly from the New People's Army asking them to pay permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees, the military said.

Capt. Lowen Gil Marquez, chief of the 82nd Civil Relations Service (CRS) Unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the candidates who received the extortion letters include Pi'Kanggumang Bayan candidates, two for mayor, two for vice mayor and one for provincial board member.

Marquez said that Capiz is now the center of the extortion activities since most of the insurgents in the province are located in mountainous and far-flung areas where the rebels operate.

The number of local candidates in Western Visayas that received extortion letters already reached more than 40, Marquez said.

Marquez said the NPAs are asking P40,000 from each candidate for mayor. Reports from Jhunex Napodilan and Felipe Celan, Inquirer Visayas and Ferdinand Zaunela, Inquirer Mindanao with a report from Oliver Suling, PIO Research

Siblings compete in mayoral race

CITY OF CALAMBA—AS MAYOR ARSENIO EVANgelista destroy of the beach town of Puerto Galera is on his third and final term, three other members of his family have joined the mayoral contest.

They include two brothers, Primitivo and Nicholas Alvarez (both independent), and a nephew Dr. Rolbert Ariarna Delos Galvez ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

Competing against them are Jaime Delgado (Lakas-CMD), Oscar Evangelista (Kampi) and Hazel Dalangin-Cruz (Partido ng Masang Pilipino). Delgado is Another Cruz was mayor for three terms before Arsenio.

The incumbent mayor (Liberal Party) is now running for vice mayor against the incumbent vice mayor, Jean Aaron Rampil, and Melchor Borgo (Lakas-CMD).

Puerto Galera is a popular tourist destination known for its white beaches and scuba diving. It has a total of 14,132 registered voters. Madonna Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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THE INVALIDS in the helicopter crash are covered with newspapers on Osos Road in Barangay Pajo, Lapu-Lapu City.

Kite's string found entangled in rotor of PAF helicopter

From page A1

He said at least three kites were being flown close to the PAF base on Mactan Island when the helicopter crashed as it was preparing to land.

Valentino has ordered the grounding of 41 PAF UH-1 helicopters until the investigation has been completed.

"We don't really say outright that the kite caused the accident but we are giving this our special attention. We hope in the natural course of investigations like this we could come up with the result within 30 days," he said.

Ordinance vs kite flying

Valentino called on local authorities to come up with an ordinance prohibiting kite flying in restricted zones. The Air Transportation Office prohibits the flying of kites within 4 kilometers of an air zone but this law is hardly followed, Valentino said.

Air Force officials also denied speculations that the P50-million helicopter was old, saying it was acquired only on July 12, 2000, under a US grant.

Air Force spokesman Col. Jose Emmanuel Tolentino said the two PAF crewmen died when the helicopter crashed at 5:16 p.m. on Hunay Bunay Street just outside the Mactan Export Processing Zone, hitting the roof of a house and two tricycles on the ground.

Sgt. Michael Encina, a crew member, died on the spot while 1st Lt. Jonia Embar, the copilot, died at around 8:30 p.m. at the Perpetual Succor Hospital here due to multiple rib and head injuries.

The pilot, Capt. Alan Villagracia, and another crew member, Sgt. Johnny Sanchez, survived. They were confined at the Mactan Doctors' Hospital, Tolentino said.

The civilian casualties were passengers and one of the drivers of the tricycles. They were identified as Ray Ledesma, 15; Charmagne Belangcasil, 20; Genevieve Garcia, 21; Ma. Monica Dongail, 37; Odelyn Rosmundo, 26; Lenica Jumawan, 49; and Lorena Palabay, 51, of Caupan, Gun-ob, Lapu-Lapu City.

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Global warming threatens to sink half of Navotas

From page A1

engaged in services, but declined to name them for now until the agreements had been finalized.

Climate savers program

Romo said the negotiators were aimed at convincing the companies to sign up for the WWF's Climate Savers Program, a global initiative aimed at mobilizing companies to cut carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.

Under the program, the WWF will help companies set objectives on how and up to what extent they can reduce emissions in their daily operations, and measure them reduce.

"We identify where their emissions are coming from. We work on a strategy on how they can lower the emissions through energy-efficient measures. We do energy audits," Romo said.

Afterward, the WWF would measure the companies against their objectives.

The WWF is proposing that firms work at increasing their efficiency in operations at low cost, purchasing power from renewable energy sources, integrating best practices on efficiency measures into the designs of buildings, factories and products, among other things.

Southeast Asian nations, including the Philippines, are the third largest emitters of carbon among developing countries.

IBM, Nike, Sony

Worldwide, 12 companies, including IBM, Lafarge, 3M, Nike, Sony and Johnson & Johnson, have signed up for the Climate Savers Program, which was launched in 2000. By 2010, their set expected to reduce their emissions by 60 million tons a year, according to the WWF.

Joining the program and meeting targets will help the companies cut down on costs and boost their profitability and production, according to Romo.

"One company that's shifting to renewable energy has reduced its operating cost by 30 percent ... That's a no-brainer. If you're a company, wouldn't you think this is a smart way to go? That's one of the goals, one of the reasons companies should go Climate Savers," she said.

Romo said the companies will be left with no choice but to assist the international process so go green and reduce their carbon emissions. Rome said.

"They can either do it now, or later. If you're a leading brand, you'll do it now because you're more forward-looking, more strategic," she said.

Romo said the WWF would next negotiate with transportation and airline companies to coax them into signing up for the program.

Offsetting option

If the companies cannot reduce their emissions, they have the option of offsetting this, say by investing in a project that would help a poor community near the sea to minimize the impact of climate change.

"What a company under Climate Savers can no longer reduce its carbon, we want to give it the option to offset the carbon it can no longer reduce. And put that offset amount into adaptation project to help poor communities adapt to climate change," Romo said.

"This is what I'm saying that Climate Savers has both sides of the spectrum—adaptation and mitigation," she added.

Access to experts

Once a company signs up, it will have access to the world's leading experts on best technologies and strategies on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to WWF.

"If we don't reducing now, then we peak by 2050, and carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere should begin to go down," Romo said.

If efforts to forestall and minimize heat rising beyond 2050, the average global temperature will inevitably rise by more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), she said.

The world has already warmed by more than 0.7°C (1.3°F) and is locked into at least another half a degree Celsius (0.9 F) to come, compared with preindustrial levels, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reported.

The campaign seeks to help prevent global temperatures from rising beyond 2°C (3.6°F), according to Romo, as rise in sea, increase level would destroy the habitat and kill a third of animal species critical to supporting human life.

"It will threaten our food supply, water supply, and can cause major disruptions in the climate," she said.

Bulging coastal cities could wash away, as the lives of millions Filipinos who live along coastlines, and the country's marine ecosystem, which is a major source of food, she warned.

Gonzalez's gaffe may cost him his job

From page A1

nibus Election Code.

The investigation started a legal process that could not be reversed without opening the Comelec to accusations of a cover-up on behalf of Gonzalez.

No matter how reluctantly Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos ordered the investigation, the controversy has for only rapidly blown up into a major political issue but it has also acquired a life of its own. It has put Gonzalez's job on the line, and has put the entire Arroyo administration itself and the Comelec on the spot.

Some of the senior implementors of Gonzalez's promise, Abalos was at first evasive on whether Gonzalez had broken the law, but he directed Jesus Dureza, the Comelec director in Western Visayas, to start an inquiry.

Definition of vote-buying

In reply to reporters' questions, Magkwalo was more forthright. He said "the giving of money to prohibited during the campaign period. If the promise to reinstated, that would constitute violation of the Omnibus Election Code and could be considered vote-buying."

The code's explicit in defining "vote-buying" as among "prohibited acts."

Section 261 (a) of the code states: "Vote-buying and vote-selling. (1) any person who, gives, offers or promises money or anything of value, gives or promises any office or employment, franchise, grant, public or private, or makes or offers to make an expenditure, directly or indirectly, or causes an expenditure to be made to any person, association, corporation, entity or community in order to induce anyone or the public in general to vote for or against any candidate or withhold his vote or to dictation, or on account of any candidate, or withhold his vote or to dictation, or on account of any candidate, or for the nomination or election of a candidate or a convention or caucus, the selection process of a political party."

Another Comelec director, Intimated Rahmin, was even more emphatic when he told ABS-CBN on Thursday that under the election code, "there are three acts considered crimes...the act of

GONZALEZ

giving, the act of offering and the act of promising. That's why the mere act of promising money is already a crime ..."

The law cannot be any clearer. It unambiguously provides a reasonable basis to undertake criminal to make a political judgment on whether or not the secretary of justice has broken the law. This case is a matter for public opinion more than a legal issue. We have to leave the legal issues to the lawyers and the courts of justice to decide."

Gonzalez and his colleagues in the administration appear to realize that he is in trouble and that he has dug his own hole with his reckless maltreatment. Gonzalez was in self-exile himself out of the hole by citing irrelevant explanations.

Reckless inadvertence

Not denying he made the offer, Gonzalez said, among others: The offer was an "inservice" or a "prize," so there is no vote-buying, he did not promise public funds, as he could back the promise with money which would "not be equal to one hen nor from my wife's poultry farm."

Following public calls for Gonzalez's dismissal or suspension, President Macapagal-Arroyo did not come to Gonzalez's defense, leaving the issue to be resolved by the Comelec, and leaving him to bolster his own stew.

Things were made worse for Gonzalez by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who put up the latest defense that Cabinet members were not prohibited from electioneering. That is not the issue. "I have not seen any Philippine secretary of justice who has been more blatant and overt in his partisanship than Gonzalez.

As the controversy gained momentum, there were signs Gonzalez was being muzzled, and had become a political embarrassment and liability to the midst of the election campaign, over a whole range of his provocative remarks over the administration's abominable human rights violations record.

Those arrogant remarks have earned widespread hostility for the country from the international community and have witnessed a broad sense of the population.

Of all Cabinet members, Gonzalez has become the most controversial. He has become the lightning rod of rising public dissatisfaction with the administration, according to Inquirer Insider, Gonzalez's latest gaffe has forced the President to consider sacking him if the controversy gets out of hand.

Outrageous statements

Gonzalez has increasingly of hooked many for his outrageous statements—that the extrajudicial killings were the "collateral damage" in the war against the communist insurgency; that the US Peace Corps volunteer Julie Campbell was to blame for her murder because she was "too close"; and that UN human rights rapporteur Philip Alston has no right to meddle in investigating the killings in the Philippines because he is merely a mouthpiece (an underling) of the United Nations.

He has gotten away with this exhibitions. This time, Gonzalez has gone over the edge. The Comelec investigation of his possible breach of the election code raises the issue whether his continued stay in the justice department is compatible with his sworn duty to ensure a fair, impartial and just administration of justice to all citizens.

Comelec is under the hammer of this incompatibility, but because he is damaging the administration's election campaign. His position has become untenable.

His latest fiasco has forced the President to make a choice between keeping and protecting the integrity of the administration of justice in the country.

The obvious logical option is that Gonzalez has to go.

Tacloban conjoined twins die

From page A1

April 11—had not lived. Angela died 8 days after birth.

Doctors had given the girls a grim prognosis since nothing could be done to fix their complex heart condition.

They said the twins were supposed to go home on Tuesday to spend their last days in Tacloban, where their mother had relocated.

The family had wanted to bring them home earlier, but problems in finding appropriate transport to go to the girls' delicate condition hampered travel plans.

Mary Grace said Mary Jessica never slept more than 2 hours at a time. Angela could sleep for only 30 minutes.

Mary Grace said Angela's heart was enlarged, and her lungs were filled with fluid.

Angela's heart was also beating irregularly, and her liver was enlarged.

The family had planned to bring them home as soon as they could afford the airfare.

Mary Jessica was then moved out of the intensive care unit and brought to a private room so that their family could spend more time with them.

Resigned

Miguel said the family seemed resigned to the fatal fate when told that the twins were gone.

"They were resigned," she told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "This was not something unexpected since they knew the twins could not be operated on and there was nothing else we could do."

She said that after the twins' breathing and heart stopped, no more forceful resuscitation was done anymore.

The doctor said she was not sorry if the twin girls had been baptized, but she thought it unlikely.

No limbo

That may well be the best of the news of the parents of Mary Jessica and Mary Grace—the twins recently worked the conjoined-at-the-stomach twins of limbo, where unbaptized babies supposedly go, deprived of communion with God.

Mary Jessica and Mary Grace were born with two separate heads, two spinal columns, two airways, two pairs of lungs and separate stomachs, but only one heart that doctors earlier said was getting overworked from having to pump blood to two bodies.

The shared heart made the twins' separation unlikely.

Miguel said she was actually amazed that the twins lasted as long as they did given their two conditions that the doctor found a dysfunction and the doctors could do little for them.

Doctors' agony

"It's depressing that there was nothing we could do even if we wanted to help them," she said. "I hope in ten years we would have made progress in medicine that would enable us to do something."

PGH spokesperson Dr. Michael Ilce said the Ante family had requested privacy so that they could quietly mourn the passing of the twins.

Miguel said the hospital had seen the rare case of dicephalus twins in the 1990s but those twins died instantly after childbirth. The Ante twins were the second case.

Aguirre brothers

Miguel said the survival of conjoined twins depended on what organs they shared.

The most famous Filipino conjoined twins are Carl and Clarence Aguirre, who were joined at the head and shared skull bones and blood vessels.

The Aguirre twins successfully separated by doctors in New York in August 2004. They celebrated their fifth birthday earlier this month.

Also in 2004, 9-month-old Princess Rhea and Princess Ann Rhyza were separated from conjoined twins found in South Africa through the help of the Anesh crown prince. They were joined at the abdomen and pelvis and had been Cebu.

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Deadline for the submission of application is today, April 30, 2007, at exactly 5:00 p.m. Entries will be raffled on May 2, 2007. For more information, please call Yvette, Dinot, or Rosa at 891-4181 locals 4338 and 4343, or you may visit www.gsis.gov.ph.

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Kahit saan, kahit kailan, maaasahan

US 5-star jails offer upgrades to convicts

From page A1

can be almost bearable.

For offenders whose crimes are usually relatively minor (car thievery should not bother) and whose family accounts initially a threats at county jails across the state offer pay-to-stay upgrades.

There are a clean, quiet, if not exactly caught, alternative to the standard county jails, where the walls are bare, the bellows inmates are hardened and privileges are few.

Many of the said pay jails operate like the newer school-based night clubs of the corrections world.

The latter is by in the know to over spells for users. And even if the court approves your sentence there, jail administrators can operate like bouncers, rejecting anyone they wish.

"I am aware that this is considered to be a five-star 'Hilton,'" said Nicole Brother, 22, who was recently booked into one of the jails here in Orange County about 40 kilometers northeast of Los Angeles. She paid $82 a day to complete a 21-day sentence for a drunken driving conviction.

Brother, who in her arrested orange T-shirt and flip-flops looked more like a contestant on "The Real World" than an inmate, dropped around for the best accommodations, travelmath.com-style.

"It's clean here," she said, perched in a jail day room on the east of month found in a hospital emergency room. "It's safe and everyone here is really nice. I haven't had a problem with any of the other girls. They give no shortgun."

For roughly $75 to $127 a day, these convicts...who are known in the self-pay parlance as "clients"—get a small cell behind a regular door, dominion of some sort, friends from other offenders and, in some cases, the right to bring in their computers.

Most of the programs—which offer 30 to 50 beds...may fall enough their marketing is not necessary.

Critics argue that the options are inherent injustices, offering cleaner, safer alternatives to those who can pay.

But critics argue that the paying inmates populate each, while hundreds of thousands of dollars a year—enabling them to better afford their other taxpayer-financed operations...and are generally easy to deal with. *New York Times News Service*

40% of Pinoys ...

From page A1

assessment, while 34 percent were undecided.

Thirty-eight percent agreed with the statement that life, therapy "tends from the welfare of the country." Twenty percent disagreed, and 36 percent were undecided.

The survey, conducted before the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, suffered a life-threatening disorder, aortic aneurysm, although presented to the respondents the statement that he "would fruit to the welfare of the country."

Forty-two percent agreed that Mike Arroyo does, while only 16 percent disagreed.

The survey also showed a high public awareness of the scandals that rocked the Arroyo administration. Fourteen were the "Hello Garci" controversy. It garnered an 86 percent public awareness.

It was followed by Antonio "Joc Jolo" Lozada's accusers, 67 percent, and the P728-million fertilizer fund scam, 54 percent.

Asked if GO considered the survey findings when it conceptualized its omnibus TV ads that painted a depressing picture of worsening corruption and poverty since Ms. Arroyo took over in 2001, GO spokesperson Ariel Tarrazo said: "Yes."

"(The Boston Survey) was a big part of the considerations when the ads were conceptualized," he said.

It was initially meant for the exclusive internal use of GO to help it plan its campaign strategy and to guide its candidates where they needed to campaign for maximum and endorsement among the people.

Vote re: one in power

One of the first salvo lines of the GO advertising campaign was, "Gusto kong boto ko sabihin ko" or "One vote against the one in power."

In the battle of endorsements between the Arroyos and the opposition's recognized leader, deposed President Joseph Estrada, the latter would win by a wide margin, according to the survey.

Thirty-six percent of the respondents said they would vote for a candidate endorsed by Estrada. Only 28 percent said they would do so for a candidate endorsed by Ms. Arroyo.

PLAN Ce REVOLT

Thus, the follow-up GO ad showed female endorsing each GO-sponsored candidate presented through the acronym PLAN (for REVOLT)—Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Perfecto Laconsi, Alan Cayetano, Bojoxy Aquino, Nikki Coseteng, Sonia Roco, Francis Escudero, Ahmad Villar, John Osmeña, Loren Legarda and Manuel "Bambol" IV.

"If Dop (Estrada) magic means that his endorsement will get lots of votes, then yes, the GO'S all-evangelists-ban magic," Tarrazo said.

"But (Dop) magic is more than that. He symbolizes someone who would have taken the rum wars out by leaving the country but instead had chosen to face the charges. That's standing for principle, something all GO candidates admire so," he said.

Rivs

Pedro Bunoan also asked whether the respondents would vote for a candidate if he or she was endorsed by ex-Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, Fernando Poe Jr.'s widow Diana Rivero and TV host Rivs Aquino.

The GO ad portraying formula phrases him calling on the people to "revolt" against corruption, also a play on the initials of some of the GO candidates.

Asked about the roles the opposition senators could play in the Senate, 74 percent of the respondents said fighting corruption; 66 percent, defending the poor; 58 percent, promoting election cleaning; 58 percent, removing the GMA; 56 percent, protecting human rights; 56 percent, reducing incidences of hunger, and 56 percent, protecting the environment.

On the statement, "The Senate is an important government institution that serves as the watchdog of processes in the government," 65 percent of the respondents agreed, 14 disagreed and 19 were undecided.

On "Whatever the economic gains this current administration is making, personally I do not feel it," 41 percent agreed, 38 percent disagreed and 20 percent were undecided.

Thirty-eight percent agreed with the statement, "I believe that the future of Filipinos will be brighter if most of the opposition senatorial candidates win." Twenty-nine percent disagreed and 33 percent were undecided.

Only 27 percent agreed with the statement, "I believe that the future of Filipinos will be brighter under the leadership of the current administration." Forty-one percent disagreed and 30 percent were undecided.

More poor people

Sixty-one percent agreed with the statement, "Under the current administration, the number of poor Filipino families in my locality increased." Twenty-two percent disagreed and 15 percent were undecided.

More than half (53 percent) of the respondents did not agree with the statement, "Under the current administration, the number of families (that) are hunger decreased in my locality." Twenty-three percent agreed and 19 percent were undecided.

Forty-six percent disagreed with the statement, "Under the current administration, human rights of Filipinos become more protected." Some 25 percent agreed and 25 percent were undecided.

The respondents were presented with a list of scandals that included the Jocle-Garci controversy.

The Sandra Cam "peeping" payoff to Bishop Oscar Bishop Ipinela "Ipay" Rivera, a brother of the President's husband, and to newspaper columnist Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, son of the First Couple, both a 44 percent public awareness rating.

Corruption in the military involving Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia when he was the comptroller had a 58 percent awareness rating.

It was followed by the fact he is Comelec-Mega Bank scanning maximum deal, at 38 percent.

Top endorsers

On political endorsements, the top endorsers were friends, relatives and bosses, with 38 percent of the respondents saying they would vote for candidates these personalities would endorse.

Seventeen percent said they would vote for a candidate endorsed by priests, while 16 percent said they would not.

TV host Willie Revillame, who along with his mother, is campaigning for her brother Senator "Manjoy" Aquino III, would be favored by 27 percent of the respondents if she asked them their votes for senatorial candidates.

Twenty-two percent said they would not do so and 46 percent said they would not be solicited. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Mayor hurt, aide killed …

From page A1
related story on Page A17 /

"We just hope it (the violence) won't escalate," Commissioner Florentino Tuason of the Commission on Elections told the Inquirer last night, in reaction to the San Carlos incident.

The shooting occurred at 11:15 p.m. in the packed gym where the nomination of Mac San Carlos City, the highlight of the city's fiesta, was being held.

Witnesses said one of the assailants threw a gas under the arm of the person Bonzalo was shaking hands with and fired at the mayor.

Antoine Dupe, Isagani Nuevo, provincial police director, said one of them was wearing a campaign vest bearing the name "Apoy."

Apoy is the nickname of Bonzalo's son, Vice Mayor Julier Bonzalo, who is running for city mayor in a match-up with his father, who is running for vice mayor.

Tribute to Martinez

Police said Martinez, an aide who had been working for Bonzalo for six years, drove him to tell out the mayor when the shots rang out. He died instantly as the bullets hit him in the body and head.

The gunmen escaped.

"My father would have died had Jojo Martinez not covered him," said Julier.

Wounded were SPO2 Jaime Almoite, an escort of the mayor; Jonathan de la Cruz, 28, a security aide; and Alvin Peruan, 29; Nadia Sil-so, 14; and Hazyra Medea, 9.

Julier was escorting Nadiel Arenas, a candidate for representative of the third congressional district, around the auditorium when the shooting occurred.

Arenas, the program guest, heard the gunshots. She and Julier were several meters from the mayor and were not hurt.

"I had not reached the area where the mayor was when I heard the gunshots," said Ayuste, daughter of outsider Sen Mare "Baby" Arenas.

Taken to St. Luke's

Arenas' supporters shouted at her to duck, but she ran to the underpass (gate).

Julier thought the gunshots were from exploding firecrackers but sensed something was wrong when people started running and running.

"I heard people shouting that the mayor was shot," he said.

Bonzalo underwent surgery at the Bacolod Hospital for bullet wounds. He was taken by helicopter to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City on Sunday.

A member of the St. Luke staff yesterday claimed no one by that name had been admitted. But nurses told an Inquirer reporter who got in that the mayor was already out of the operating room.

Julier said that his father was a "lot better now."

"He was trying to open his eyes and trying to talk," he said.

Julier is running against former Mayor Douglas Arrizabalo in the Bacolod race.

An election hot spot

The police had classified San Carlos as one of the "areas of concern" in this year's elections because of the intense political rivalry and Comelec election-related violence.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, regional police director, said he was sending 34 personnel from the regional mobile group to augment the city police force.

Bataoil said the incident happened despite stepped-up security measures.

"This is not our area where determined assailants will find ways to implement their plan," Bataoil said. He said empty shells from 9-mm and .45-cal. pistols indicated that two suspects were involved in the attack.

But he said the gunmen could have had more accomplices.

Director General Oscar Calderon, Philippine National Police chief, ordered reinforcements to Pangasinan during a visit on Saturday night.

Rep. Democrito Talagan, the outgoing representative of the district, denounced the assassination attempt on Bonzalo.

Cowboy country

"We fear San Carlos City will revert to being cowboy country where violence and killings are the norm of the game for the duration of the election period," Talagan said in a statement.

In Mankate, a village many than in Cantiguas town was killed and two others were wounded when their houses were fired upon by unidentified men on Saturday night, police said.

The victims were all known supporters of Rep. Rimilou Bastos Lucero of the third district.

Police said the councilman, identified as Romeo Arangue, died on the spot from multiple bullet wounds.

The victims were riddled with bullets while cooking inside his house at around 10 p.m. on Saturday, police said. They recovered three M-16 shells and seven 30-14 shells at the house.

An hour and a half later, two civilians were wounded when they were shot while they were about to go to sleep in their house, also in Cantiguas, police said.

Investigators showed Bastilo Alma and an unidentified companion were fired upon at around 11:40 p.m.

Bracing for violence

As election day neared, police officials were bracing for more bloodshed.

But because of "premature" measures that the national police had put up, the officials said they were optimistic that they could avert more violent incidents in the next two weeks.

The PNP also said this year's election-related violent incidents were low compared to the election years of 2001 and 2004.

Rank PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao and Task Force Usig chief Deputy Director Sen. Antonio Bilosan said the PNP was expecting an increase in the number of election-related violent incidents for the period, if not more to look at what happened in the elections of 2001 and 2004.

"History teaches us lessons and we learn to base this on a critical period where the (poll) could temperature heats up," Pagdilao said in a phone interview.

"But I hope and pray that the additional measures that we are doing will prevent more violence," he said.

Pagdilao and Bilosan said the PNP had been deploying more police and over Special Action Forces in areas of concern, increasing police patrols and putting up checkpoints to curb violence. *With reports from Christina O. Avendaño, Nikko Dizon and Margene Ortiz in Bacolod; Bobby Lobodan, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and Jeoffrey Maitem, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Rolando Pinuy, Mindanao Bureau*

CAMPAIGN posters sprout like mushrooms in the Comelec-designated poster area in Poblacion Park in Old Albay District in Legazpi City. AFP

Congressional candidate dies

By Jeoffrey Maitem, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Rolando Pinuy
Inquirer Mindanao

KIDAPAWAN CITY—SUE HAS JUST had a haircut in a beauty salon. It was to be her last.

Congressional candidate Suharto Ambolodto, 62, was in his vehicle when the guns of two policemen—together were off, killing her in the back.

Running under the administration party Kampi in the May 14 polls, Ambolodto was working to reconcile the second district of North Cotabato in the House of Representatives.

She was accidentally shot by her nephew PO1 Carlos Jubilan Montes, at around 7:45 p.m. Saturday, provincial police said.

Senior Supt. Federico Delay, North Cotabato police chief, said the incident happened while Montes was about to open the door of the vehicle for Ambolodto.

"He accidentally pressed the trigger," Delay told the Inquirer.

Ambolodto was brought to the Kidapawan Doctors Hospital and died at around 9 p.m.

Linda Hamadar, the women's affairs and the provincial social welfare officer, told the Inquirer that Montes was traumatized by the accident.

By Saturday night police custody.

"They came from the safest where she had her hair trimmed. When they arrived home, the door of her Adventure stall motioned. So while Montes was trying to open it, his gun accidentally went off," Rosalie said.

She said her sister continued a political career unusual in the Arab and that she broke also for her beings.

Rosalie will replace her sister in the congressional race.

A political militant in her student days, Ambolo was a target of death threats in the 1990s as a human rights lawyer. She also set up the Bangsamoro Foundation, a children's center taking care of victims of war during the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

In many she was a woman whose heart was for the Island and the victims of oppression.

"She was like the sun … always giving of her inspiration," said Rufa Padilla-Bion, a former journalist.

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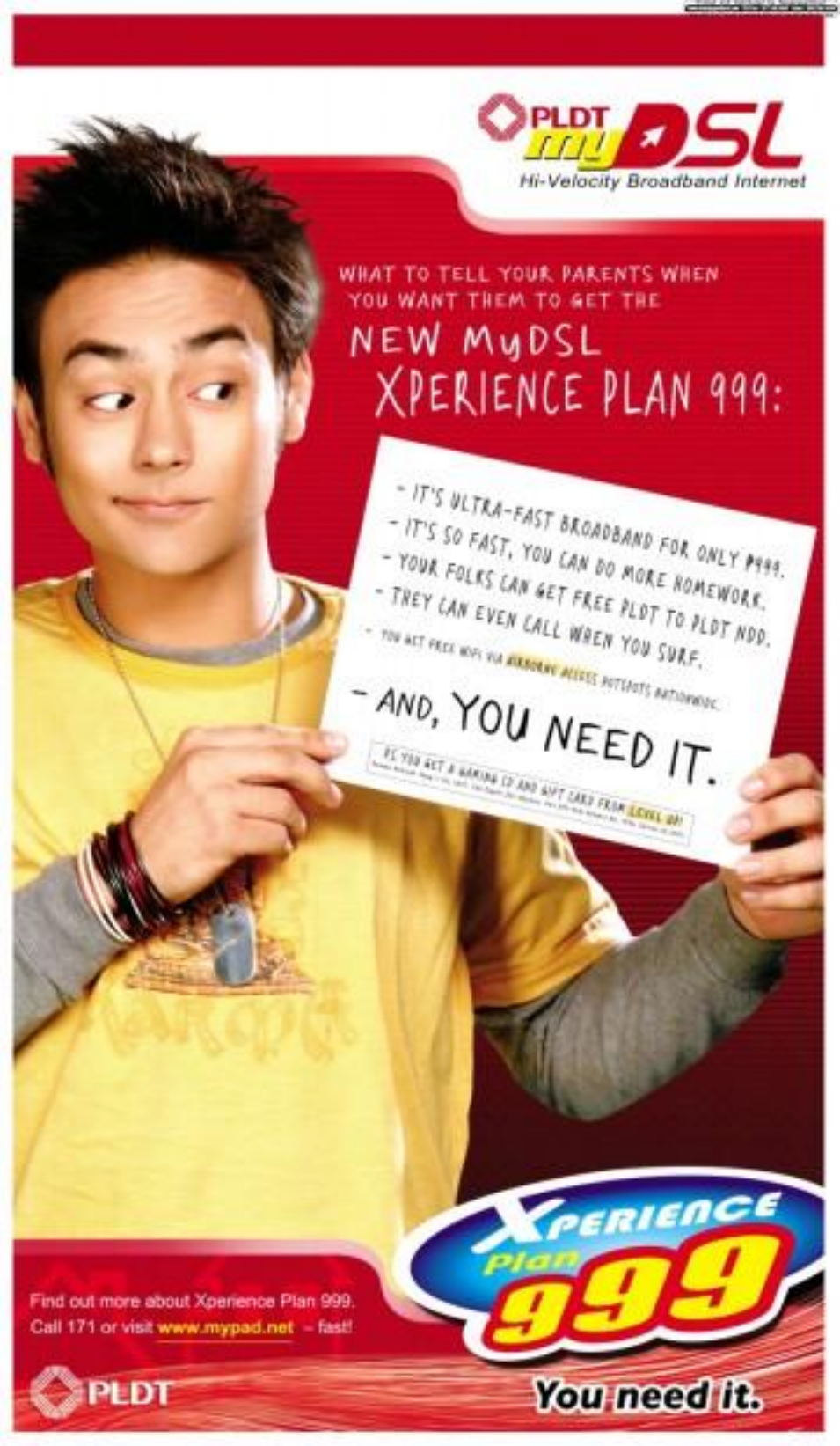
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TRAFFIC OBSTRUCTIONS ON UN AVENUE

"The stuff piled in front of the flea-type tiki that's located on UN Avenue beside a 7-11 store is causing problems for motorists. Parked outside the tiki are pushcarts, motorbikes, a rolling store with a big umbrella, a tricycle and monobloc chairs which take up most of the sidewalk and spill into the street. The MMDA claims this is not under their jurisdiction. Who should we turn to, then? I pass by this area daily. Help, please."—David Moreno, 46, Quezon City

2 women injured in Makati robbery

By DJ Yap

FOUR MEN CLAD IN "PULOMBONG" SUNGLASSES staged a daring daylight robbery at a bakeshop in Makati City yesterday, making off with the motorists' valuables and leaving two of them hurt.

According to the police, the suspects entered the Red Ribbon Bakeshop on Jupiter Street in Barangay Bel-Air at 10:44 a.m.

Pointing handguns, they announced a holdup and began taking customers' possessions, including mobile phones and wallets. Giovanni Claro, the bakeshop's operations manager told investigators.

A customer, Rhodelle Yap, 46, of Diliman, Quezon City, resisted when she was grabbed her purse, prompting one of them to shoot her thrice, said SPO3 Adnan Kandilap of the Police Community Precinct 9.

Yap was rushed to the Makati Medical Center for wounds in the right chest, right armpit and left thigh. Kandilap, however, said that she is only in her boss' declared out of danger.

Another suspect hit with a gun the hand of customer Rina Estrella Soares after she refused to give up her laptop computer.

She was later brought to the nearby ASIAN Hospital for minor bruises. Kandilap said the incident.

The police officer said only the customers were robbed as the suspects did not try to open the cash register of the bakeshop.

According to witnesses, the four men left on four different motorcycles.

Man's body found in QC ecopark

By Margie C. Ortiz

THE BODY OF AN UNIDENTIFIED man was found floating in the service of Lagro Junction in the Lagro Ecopark in East Fairview, Quezon City on Saturday afternoon.

Policemen said the body was found by the park's security personnel led by Senior Insp. Rene de Mesa at around 2:30 p.m. while they were inspecting the premises.

They described the man as 5'7" in height, between 22 and 25 years old and sporting long hair.

Police operatives later brought the body to the Philippine Bureau of Police Crime Laboratory for autopsy.

Metro Briefs

Man killed

A MAN was killed while two other people were injured in an accident in Barangay Ugong, Pasig City on Saturday night, police reported yesterday.

The fatality was identified as Ronnel Lacsina, 24, married and a resident of Barangay Maybunga, Antipolo City. Police said Lacsina was standing on the sidewalk in front of the 100 Commercial Complex when a passenger jeepney hit him at about 11:05 p.m. The passenger's driver, Ronnie Dagang — the live-in partner Lizy Chavez said her 1-year-old daughter — were injured. Dagang told the police that the jeepney's brakes malfunctioned.

Kristine L. Alave

Help wanted

ALBERT Cruz, 22, was recently operated on for colon cancer. He is still confined at the Charity ward of the Far Eastern University-Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, Quezon City. Because he has been unable to pay the hospital bill which has reached over half a million pesos, his wife stands money to undergo chemotherapy. Albert, the breadwinner in his family, has been forced to quit his job as a call center agent because of his illness. His family is appealing for help from brotherhood readers. Those who want to get in touch with Albert can call 8971-4013/204 or his friend, Lia, at 0927-7621910.

Citizen's call

0918-8965566

Away with MMDA lane dividers in south!

HEAVY TRAFFIC builds up on Edsa in the Makati area is getting worse because the use dividers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority are forcing Otrip-bound buses to swerve to get to the ramp reserved for this purpose. Typical of many instances, traffic enforcers often stop vehicles at the foot of the South Luzon Expressway-bound ramp, leaving only one lane for motorists. These enforcers are the real cause of traffic obstruction in many intersections. MMDA did a fine job in many places with their 8-ton dividers, but these lane dividers on Edsa, especially in the Magallanes, Ayala Avenue and Buendia areas, are irritants. Traffic flow would be better if these dividers were installed in the Makati. Please remove the dividers and see how the traffic flow will improve and travel time cut significantly.

ARC M. Maminiano-Cite

Stoplights ignored

PEDESTRIANS and their lives crossing Quezon Avenue at the corner of Examiner and Scout Albano Streets. Motorists simply do not follow the stoplights. Are we waiting for an accident to happen? (photos)

BEVERLY A. De Guzman-City

What happened to voters' ID cards?

WE HAVE not been given our voters' identification cards and election day is fast approaching. What gives?

JUN VALTERO, Jr. M. Kapunan-ay, Caloocan City

Estero used for garbage

HAVE you seen the state of esteros in Manila, especially the one near the Quiapo mall? I am referring to Estero de Magdalena where there's wanton dumping of garbage into the waterway. This pile-up poses health threats to those living near the esteros. I hope that whoever becomes the next mayor of Manila would give due attention to the cleaning of esteros like this one. MMP

JOHNTHAN JR Ila. Dec. Manila

Did you know

ON APRIL 1, 1898, Americans led by Admiral George Dewey defeated Spanish naval forces under Admiral Patricio Montojo in the Battle of Manila Bay. The Spanish garrison in Cavite was bombarded by the warships of the American warship. Maine, at the bottom of Havana in Cuba, a Spanish colony. The American navy victory in Manila Bay signaled the start of their occupation of the Philippines.

Cpt.Lt. Estabelo Jupiter Research

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Warmest greetings to the men and women of the Julie's Franchise Corporation, and **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE AWARDEES IN THIS YEAR'S LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE AWARDS.**

I am particularly pleased with your efforts to recognize our public elementary graduates who have shown exemplary performance in academics and leadership, especially those coming from poor families. Indeed, nation-building must be instilled in the young to transform themselves into instruments of change regardless of their stations in life.

I also commend your corporation for being an active partner of the government in improving the state of our economy and in providing a better life for our people through your corporate social responsibility projects.

More power to the Julie's Franchise Corporation and Mabuhay!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo,
President, Republic of the Philippines

Dear graduates,

I salute your success! You have made the first step towards your goal in life. Be encouraged to take the next level of your education. Be inspired to know what you want to be in the future. When you get to know what you really want, focus on it. Do not lose track so that you will not go astray.

You may start with a simple goal, with faith and trust in God, dedication and hard work, nothing and no one can stop you in fulfilling your dreams.

You, our youths can do so much in making the Philippines a great nation. A nation to be proud of. Perform your duties well for our country and for the greater glory of God.

Congratulations!

Julia R. Candiotoco,
Founder, Julie's Bakeshop

Isang mainit na pagbati sa Leaders of the Future Awardees!

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LEADERS OF THE FUTURE AWARD

Julie's Bakeshop

Kasama Natin Araw-araw

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ilanes

Suicide blast near Shiite shrine kills 71

BAGHDAD—AMERICAN FORCES FIRED AN ARtillery barrage at targets in southern Baghdad on Sunday while Iraqi rescuers scoured wreckage for the victims of another deadly car bomb that left more than 70 dead.

At the site near one Baghdad, a series of massive detonations could be heard from windscreens, district, where Iraqi security officials said a US operation was under way in support of the capital's joint security plan.

"Explosive rounds of artillery were fired from Forward Operating Base Hotel," said US spokesperson Lt. Col. Chris Garver, without identifying the target of a salvo that could be heard 30 km away.

Meanwhile, the death toll from Saturday's suicide bombing near a revered shrine in the Shiite pilgrimage city of Karbala rose to 71 overnight as scores of victims suffered in hospital wards crowded with 170 wounded.

City health spokesperson Jaber Khalfan told AFP at the city hospital that the dead included five women, five children and eight civilians burned so severely that their age or gender could not be determined.

"There was a 2-year-old Iranian girl among those killed, and four Iranian men," he added. Karbala is a site of pilgrimage for Shiites from around the world.

US command in Baghdad reported that fighting and roadside bombs had claimed the lives of seven American soldiers and two marines over two days of intense violence, bringing the monthly toll to 55.

With two days left, April is already the month's deadliest month for coalition forces since a US-led invasion have overthrown dictator Saddam Hussein in March 2003, only to confer under attack from a violent insurgency.

The scale of the carnage, more than 10 weeks after the start of a major US and Iraqi security plan, will serve as another blow to the authority of Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and US President George W. Bush.

Bush has seen domestic support for his war strategy collapse, and this week he is expected to veto a bill passed by Congress to set further military funding to a plan to begin withdrawing US troops in December.

The rage in Karbala over Saturday's attack—in which protesters were quicker to blame the failure of the Iraqi security forces than the bombers—matched Maliki's Iraqi counterparts.

The blast followed a pattern emerging on attempts by Sunni extremists to foment sectarian violence. AFP

PAKISTAN'S Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao (right) looks at one of the victims of a suicide bomb attack on April 29. AFP PHOTO

Inspectors find rebuilt projects crumbling in Iraq

IN A TROUBLING SIGN FOR THE American-financed reconstruction program in Iraq, inspectors for a federal oversight agency have found that in a sampling of eight projects where the United States had declared success, some were no longer operating as designed because of plumbing and electrical failures, lack of proper maintenance, apparent looting and expensive equipment that has gone.

The United States has previously admitted, sometimes under pressure from federal inspectors, that some of its reconstruction projects have been abandoned, defaced, or poorly maintained. But this is the first time inspectors have found that projects officially declared a success—in some cases, as little as six months before the latest inspections—were no longer working properly.

The inspectors ranged geographically from northern to southern Iraq, and covered projects created across many health, humanitarian and power sectors, the Baghdad International Airport.

Officials at the oversight agency, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, said they had made an effort to sample different regions and various types of projects, but that they were constrained from taking a truly random sample in part because many projects were in areas too unstable to visit. So, they said, the initial set of eight projects—which—out a total of about $500 million—should not be seen as a true statistical measure of the thousands of projects in the roughly $30-billion American rebuilding program.

The reconstruction effort was originally designed to nearly equal the trillion push to stabilize Iraq, allow the government to function and hasten its financial and economic self-sufficiency.

Exactly who is to blame for the poor record on maintenance for the first sample of eight projects was not laid out in the report, but the American reconstruction program has been largely criticized for not including in its rebuilding budget enough of the costs for spare parts, training, stronger construction, and other elements that could enable projects to continue to function once they have been built. NYT

WORLDBRIEFS

Olmert refuses to quit over Lebanon war inquiry

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has no intention of resigning over the report on the last year's Lebanon war, expected to be critical of his premier, an aide said AFP on Sunday. According to media in his native Israel, the inquiry by a government-commissioned panel headed by retired judge Eliahu Winograd is set to harshly criticize the way Olmert launched the July-August war against Lebanon's Hezbollah militia. Defense Minister Amir Peretz and former army chief of staff Dan Halutz, who resigned in January and became the most senior figure to fall over the war, are also expected to be censured by the findings, according to the leaks. AFP

OLMERT AFP

Top conductor flees polluted Hong Kong

HONG KONG—The renowned conductor in charge of Hong Kong's leading orchestra has quitted the family out of the city because of its pollution, a news report said Sunday. Danish maestro Jan de Haan, who conducts Hong Kong's acclaimed Philharmonic Orchestra, told the Sunday Morning Post he had moved his wife and two children to the US state of Wisconsin to get them away from the environmental. His comments came as city leaders consider a new pollution alert system to give residents better and earlier warning of bad air days. "We have a 4-year-old girl and she has some asthma problems," Di Haan told the Post. "The air quality is too dirty in Hong Kong. I don't know what it does to the little lungs who grow up there and are just don't want to take the risk. It is that simple." AFP

Freed French hostage appeals for kidnapped colleagues

KABUL—A French woman freed by the Taliban after 24 days in captivity flew out of Afghanistan overnight after a tearful appeal for the release of her four colleagues. The French embassy said Sunday. The aid worker was freed in the southern province of Kandahar on Saturday with a message from her captors demanding the withdrawal of France's troops in the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force. "She arrived back in Kabul late AFP, adding the medical had been treated with "no disorders." It would not release details of where the woman, Celine Cordelier and aged between 29 and 30, had flown in or who had transported her. AFP

CORDELIER AFP

Pakistan probes blast targeting minister

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—Pakistan's government has formed an investigation team to probe a suicide blast targeting the interior minister which injured him and killed 28 others, officials said Sunday.

Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao had just addressed a public gathering in the town of Charsadda in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) bordering Afghanistan on Saturday when the bomber walked towards the stage and triggered the explosion.

"We have formed a joint investigation team comprising provincial and federal police and intelligence agencies to probe the incident," NWFP chief minister Akram Durrani said reporters after meeting Sherpao.

Sherpao, a staunch supporter of President Pervez Musharraf, has been a prominent figure in touting the government's achievements in the fight against terrorism.

"I was the target of this blast," he told national television.

The interior ministry said Sherpao was given first aid at a hospital in Charsada before being taken to his Peshawar residence.

Officials said Sherpao was seriously badly and had received gunshot to Charsada on Sunday, where he attended the funeral prayers of victims dead amid tight security.

Federal Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani told a press conference in Peshawar the death toll rose to 28 on Sunday as two of the injured had died in hospital, adding 52 people hurt in the blast.

The attacker carried about eight to 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of explosives, Durrani said.

"The government is committed to stopping such incidents," he added.

Provincial police chief Shaukat Pasha reportedly said that investigators had found the head of the suicide bomber. "The bomber appeared to be an Afghan," Pak said. AFP

Famed Russian cellist Rostropovich dies at 80

MOSCOW—RUSSIA SAID farewell on Sunday to Mstislav Rostropovich, the music legend who became a powerful emblem of resistance to the Soviet communist system.

A funeral service for the master cellist, who died on Friday at the age of 80, was due to be held in the golden-domed Christ the Savior cathedral as Moscow others bans drafts of mourners came to pay their last respects.

Rostropovich will then be buried in the grounds of Moscow's 16th-century Novodevichy convent, joining the veteran celebrated composer Dmitry Shostakovich, and other leading cultural and political figures.

Musicians and flowers in the cathedral, which was rebuilt after Stalin then Rostropovich helped raise, as an ornate replica of a grandiose church in the same location that was destroyed to lower room.

Many paid tribute to the personal qualities of a man who was feted in the former Union for his inventions ideals and who returned to Russia in August 1990 to help the country's first president Boris Yeltsin defy a hostile coup.

A nostalgia-filled farewell for Yeltsin, who died on Monday was held in the same cathedral only on Wednesday and he was buried in the same Novodevichy convent where Rostropovich will be laid to rest.

"He was a guide in life. He had the kind of character traits that make you want to be like him. He

ROSTROPOVICH in Feb. 6, 1996 photo taken in a Paris concert. AFP

was an extraordinary man, not just because he was a very talented musician," said a youth Lida Barbara, 48.

Some musicians remembered the iconic musician when Rostropovich returned to Russia in August 1990 and played an impromptu cello recital opposite the KGB headquarters to throngs of pro-democracy protesters.

"I will never forget seeing him in August 1991 ... The little fragile man was ready to lose everything for his country," said Nikolai Lebedinin, a 37-year-old lawyer.

Ekaterina Ippolitovskaya, 52, a dancer, said: "He was an extraordinary man. People like him are an honor for Russia — she is a loss for world culture." AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Archers nip Eagles; SBC Lions score /A30
- Pistons make Magic vanish /A31

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

PBA heroes take Baguio by storm

By Manang R. Canillo

BAGUIO CITY—IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH THAT THE INNS IN THIS scenic, chilly city got a great match during the PBA All-Star Game.

The professional superstars donned a long stretch of historic Session road here, planted trees, painted sidewalks, greeted and bebe hugs and mingled with a host.

And that was before the fresh trees thereof—as a team and individually—or the University of Baguio floor while being introduced to an overflow crowd that embraced the players like immigrants.

Baguio had run the red carpet for the PBA for the centerpiece All-Star Game, much in the same way that La Union has Fernando City hosted the preliminaries before the weekend.

"This is a great place with a whole lot of great and gracious people," commissioner Noli Eala said.

Eala was co-chased by the super scene-makers that he even billed our "I love you more today than yesterday" during the street party on Friday night before heading the delegation to covered beauty Session duties.

The PBA delegation was all over the country's summer capital, planting trees, painting sidewalks and visiting less privileged—once terminally sick—patients at the Baguio General Hospital.

There was a huge turnaway crowd at the UB gym. It might could not accommodate more than what it already did—more than 3,000.

And more failed to see the Legends fall for the first time in the Legends Showcase, which featured three active players...the cop three players in the 3-Point Shootout in La Union—against some of the best shooters of yesteryears.

Nine-three point champion Estalee Hermosisima actually didn't even need to shoot as Willie Miller, who was runner-up, scored 26 points that put the contest up conveniently ahead, 26-25.

The Legends suffered their first loss in four editions of the event, the team made up of 1992/2007 Ato Agustin, executive Sta. Lucia coach Bonnie Fernandez and San Miguel Beer assistant Hubert Jumalon losing badly.

Agustin was good for 13 points, and Hermosisima, who could be the best shooter in the struggling Sta. Lucia Realtors, who could be the best shooter in the struggling Sta. Lucia Realtors in the Fiesta Cup had he been still active, Bowl 16.

Jumalon, who owns the record for the most number of three-pointers in a 48-minute game with seven, found his shots nothing can more often than not.

The final score was 49-36 after three quarters played. 21 persons drew points that came after Gary David had contributed 16.

That total set a new record in the event, erasing the 42 set by Jojo Lastimosa, Bogs Adornado and Ric-Ric Marcelo for the Legends' victory last year.

[INSET: Alaska's record from left] oldtimer autograph seeker as Asi Taulava (holding a paint roller) poses for a photograph. Gerald Anderson at the Tide '94 Tour reminiscence yesterday's sidework whilewatching quickly of the All-Stars as Dennis Rond in Baguio City is Kelly Williams of Sta. Lucia.

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Archers nip Eagles; SBC Lions score

By Inquirer Sports Staff

LA SALLE BEEN FIRST BLOOD IN WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE A thrilling resumption of its cold rivalry with Ateneo this year.

Gearing up for its return to the NAAP after a year-long suspension, the Green Archers tested out the Blue Eagles, 71-69, yesterday in the start of the Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

A three-point play by veteran JV Casio clinched the win for the Archers, who blew a 63-59 lead with five minutes 41 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Rong Escobal shot 22 points and Gabby Lanete added 16 as Sun Bula downed Xavier, 75-72, in the opening game of the action featuring the top teams expected to figure prominently in this season's NCAA and UAAP wars.

Casio finished with 12 points, behind another La Salle veteran, JV Tang, who had 11.

John Mechtildeskin paced the cadet leader Eagles squad with 17 while Christopher Intrinsico added 14.

The Taft-based Archers started out strong and led by 30-26 before the Eagles rallied behind homeliang, Alex Rivera and Charles Tia to tie in the match at halftime, 34-all.

The scores

LA SALLE 71 — Tang 11, Casio 12, 10 Rivera 11, Rodriguez 7, Cruz 7, Mendoza 6, Lee 5, Intrinsico 4, Tia 3, Ayo 1, Abayon 0, Lee 0, Ayo 0, Mendoza 0, Intrinsico 0.

ATENEO 69 — Mechtildeskin 17, Intrinsico 14, Abayon 8, Rivera 8, Ayo 7, Lee 5, Rodriguez 5, Cruz 3, Mendoza 2, Abayon 0, Lee 0, Ayo 0, Mendoza 0, Intrinsico 0.

Quarters: 17-15, 34-34, 53-50, 71-69

LA SALLE'S JV Casio drives off Ateneo's foreign recruits John Mechtildeskin (left) and Ezra Lukaro in yesterday's game. ALVIN KASIBANG

Timely, urgent letter

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

THE GAMES AND AMUSEMENT Board wanted to raise, suspend up, and ordered an immediate all-out investigation.

But, needless to say, it is a commendable move.

But the best the GAB should get is the Bond-Aid Award, from the Philippine Sportswriters Association when the prestigious body honors achievers for 2007.

For one, Lauro Lito Saenola had to sacrifice his life for authorities to finally wake up to the deadly reality of pro-arranged matches in the boxing ring.

It was already too late before the foul flesh was discovered.

* * *

What seems next was a frantic move to weed out the guilty.

Due dubious Filipino match makers who had succeeded in bringing ill-equipped local boxers in Thailand had been exposed. The arrest was played up as though this would totally stop the malpractice.

But a closer look would show that the death of Stevenson, based on the subsequent press releases from other media the GAB appear as though it's a no-nonsense, dedicated, hard-working government agency.

* * *

The victim-board honesty and sincerity of the GAB could, however, be put to doubt—but one thought this letter we are printing, the complaints aired by the letter-writer seems merchant-astute.

Please read on:

I am writing this letter to inform the GAB, through your column Bare Eye, that I will only share the issue and protest their own employees, about a blatant anomaly and violation of a rupture in professional boxing in these parts of the country.

A "fans-boss" of a certain GAB commissioner, a lowly employee in the boxing division, was temporarily assigned to Zamboanga City last year to open a satellite office of the agency in that area. This employee has since appointed himself as the Lord of Tribulation in that place, made to the dismay of GAB employees in Mindanao and Visayas, as well as in town.

The official income solicited but forwarded to GAB boxing division Chief Nonoy Cruz—full in a seven sports and games inspector of the GAB but he is empowered by the good commissioner to a one percenter, grant licenses and claim travel expenses, as well as go anywhere in the country in the interest of the agency.

Worse, the documentary and medical requirements of all applicants, be it boxers, managers, promoters, etc., are all fake and are just produced by the employees himself—that is clear!

Major boxing promotions are held and reported to GAB to answer the not constantly being beaten to paper and claim travel expenses from the agency for all those supposed scheduled Cebu fights are then not abroad as fodder to hungry boxers of foreign managers and for higher interest.

The employee also makes a big time moneymaking. By hyperbole and contradicting letters in his midst to see to "fairer" injury-arranged bouts. Those boxers are seen around the country, and the official peddles his names to the highest bidder.

We doesn't expect GAB officials to any save and other bugs that he has, the commissioner, is hurting him all the way! Commissioner wonder what he got to Hadn't the anti-corruption unit?

He also reportedly maintains a lavish lifestyle for a mere employee. He has a mistress and wears expensive things.

I hope this good Chair of the GAB as end for the anomalous career will do something about the matter. People are already wondering why his behavior is being tolerated.

I am very sorry in the GAB "mess" there's things to be stopped as the image of the GAB has not been that good for a long time. I think it's high time the higher-ups in the agency cleaned the boxing public some decency and will-then rank of undisciplined scumbags.

Thank you.

Mr. Jose Refugio
Concerned Boxing Enthusiast
Zamboanga del Sur

Que ends up tied for 5th in Beijing

BEIJING—ANGELO QUE (600.00) two of the last three holes to cap a three-under-par 69 that shared the Filipino into a tie for fifth place at the inaugural $500,000 Pine Valley Beijing Open won by Indian Gaurav Ghorbani Sunday.

Que, the 2004 Caltex Masters Vietnam champion, won $18,725 for his finest finish in the current three Tour with a 10-under 278 at the Pine Valley Golf and Country Club.

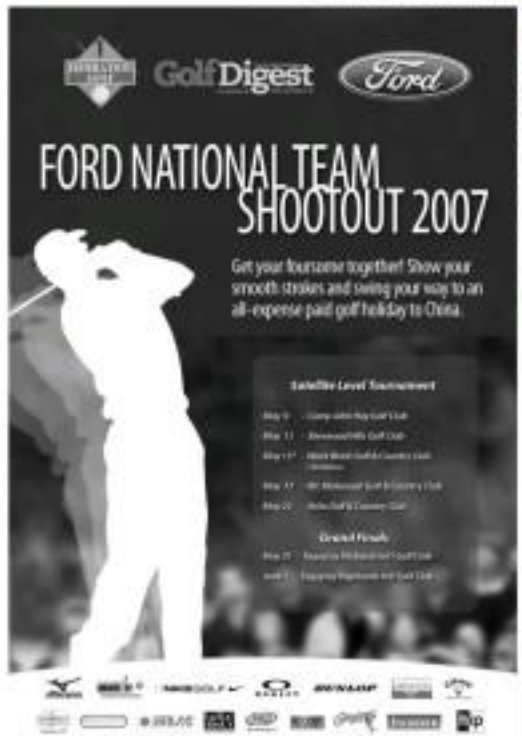
With eagles rounds of 70-72-67, Que zoomed up to a deadlock with 2005 Philippine Open champion Scott Hemp of Australia who shared second with a 71.

Gerald Bender, after a 75 in the third round, rallied with a 68 and joined a five-way tie for fifth place at 281 with Chinese Liang Wenchong (74) and Zhang Lianwei (66), Australian Scott Laird (70) and Thailand's Panuwat Muenkeb (74).

Bender picked up $8,546.

Hird knocked out with his two strokes with a 274 total. He won $79,250 and moved up to seventh overall in the UBS Order of Merit with total earnings of $369,164.

Filipino star Frankie Miñoza passed up the tournament to play in the Corona 2007 event of the Japan Golf Tour where he ended up tied for 18th with rounds of 75-71-72-73 to win $9,000. Asian Tour



RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

3 provinces, MM city eyed to host Palaro

By Jude Nevaro

SUBMARINE CITY—AT LEAST three provinces and a city in Metro Manila are being eyed as potential hosts of the Palarong Pambansa next year.

Education Undersecretary Ramon Bacani said local government officials from Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Palawan and Pasay City have expressed interest in hosting the Games for demonstration and secondary student-athletes.

Bacani said they sent letters to potential hosts last year but when government officials were informed that the games would return to Luzon after the Intramuros City meet.

"There were letters but we learned it was down and talked about it yet," said Bacani.

Bacani likes Bataan but was barred to run

SPURS 20

SPURS 19 points

Pistons make Magic vanish

Cavs, Spurs seize control; Jazz tie series vs Rockets

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—THE DETROIT PISTONS LED the way into the second round of the National Basketball Association playoffs on Saturday with a 97-93 victory over the Orlando Magic.

Chauncey Billups and Richard Hamilton combined to score Detroit's final 12 points as the Pistons completed a four-game sweep of The Magic in their best-of-seven first-round series.

The Pistons, top seeds in the East, posted their first four-game sweep in 16 years.

"We kept a good focus. We swept the series but by no means were we sweepers," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said.

"We had to play little better. They definitely didn't give it to us. We had to execute and really lock down defensively."

The last time they accomplished the feat was against the Los Angeles Lakers in the 1990 NBA finals.

Detroit now awaits the winner of the series between Chicago and defending NBA champion Miami. The Bulls have the best on the ropes in 10-point win Sunday and the series ties Tuesday.

It looked like the Pistons might have to return home for Game Five when Orlando led 88-86 after Grant Hill's dunk with 3:14 to play.

The Pistons took a timeout after Hill's basket and promptly started to take control.

"I could have gone the other way and we could be playing a Game Five," Billups said. "But we stayed poised, we got stops and we executed down the stretch."

Meanwhile, Washington ran out of comebacks as LeBron James scored 20 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers hold off the Wizards, 98-92, and take a commanding three-games-to-none lead in their first-round series.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added a season high-tying 26 points on 10-of-13 shooting for the Cavaliers, who squandered a 17-point halftime lead before clamping down on shorthanded Washington in the final minutes.

Game Four is Monday, when the Wizards will try to stay alive. In NBA history, 79 teams have held 3-1 leads and none have lost the series.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur broke out of his scoring slump with 28 points, added Yao Ming defensively, and Utah evened its first-round series with Houston with a 98-85 win at the Rockets.

Deron Williams added 25 points, including 11 in the third quarter. Utah outscored Houston 35-17 in the period and again finished the Rockets on a late run.

Jordan scored 20 points to help the Charlotte Bobcats hold off the Milwaukee Bucks, 97-93, and take a commanding three-games-to-none lead in their first-round series.

Dyshawn Pierre

Global City tale of 2 victories

HERMOSO DESAMITO NEVERE A STRONG FINISH to breast the tape ahead of everyone else. For Silverio Tolentino, it was a much closer call.

Desamito rolled over to the last three kilometers, then held off a closing pack in the final kilometer to take the 30K 3rd Aerobics Global City Run held in an out-and-back course that started in front of Bonifacio High School.

Tolentino, on the other hand, distanced himself from his closest rival only with the finish already in sight to take the distaff side 400m race.

Desamito covered a pack that included Aget de Asis, Ernald Gabol and Reynaldo delos Reyes and the former national athlete pulled off from the group to take the coveted 5 km race of the finish line.

De Asis, Gabol and Delos Reyes tried to make one final surge in the last kilometer but Desamito had enough left left to blow off their charge and nail the P6,000 top purse.

Desamito timed 14 minutes and 41 seconds. De Asis (15:09) finished second with Gabol (15:09 third. De Asis produced P5,000 while Gabol settled for P4,000.

Tolentino dug deep in the final stretch to break away from University of the East's Marisol Hinampas.

"We were really neck together and I was able to get away from her only in the last 10 meters," said Tolentino, a varsity runner from Far Eastern University in Pilipinas.

Tolentino, the defending champion in the 40-to-49 bracket of the Bike-Marathon, finished the course in 42:10. Maquilan, who was second at 43:03, is now leading his team in the CAAP track competitions where she hopes to get back at the champion.

Run Bonifacio Development Corp. headthe commercial operation Jun Banzar fired the starting gun and sounded the crack pistol and trophies to the winners.

Top nine winners: Senators Seniors: 1. and Gabriela Agnes (30, Bonifacio High); and Jaimelo Sagalan (28, 14); Gabel Gabol and Reynaldo Lanes (28, 10:3). Gabel Gabol and Alana Jane Ann Cruz (26, 12:1); Gabriel Gabol and Gamboa Lanes (26, 10:2); Sangalan Gamboa and Alana Sagg (25, 23:1); Mahinelo Gamboa and Jo Magel (24, 29:1); Mahinelo Mahilong and Frank Tagore (24, 23:1); Hernando Pineda and Rodrigo Lanegaan (24, 10:4); Angelo Aganag and Cindy Magel (24, 10:4); Ojo Aganag and Alana Gabel (24, 10:4); Gabriel Gabol and Gabel Gabol (24, 10:4); Gabriel Gabol and Gabel Gabol (24, 10:4); Gabriel Gabol and Gabel Gabol

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Gov't plans agriculture economic zones

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Move to lure investors, bring growth to Mindanao

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING SETTING UP ECONOMIC zones mainly for agricultural businesses in an effort to create new avenues for investments and take advantage of the country's idle but arable lands.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said in a briefing that he had taken up the matter with Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap and has broached the subject verbally with President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom he said was "supportive" of the idea.

"Guidelines for this are being prepared, which of course would go through the standard process of approval," Favila said.

He explained that the planned investment zones would be similar to existing special economic zones, at least in terms of creation.

"There would be a different set of incentives and some one to attract local and foreign investors," Favila said.

The trade chief added that the initiative was primarily aimed at boosting economic activities and development in Mindanao.

"Such investments and projects may include processing [of agricultural, food and other products] as well as integrated operations," he said.

In related news, 28 national government agencies and attached offices last week signed a memorandum of agreement to facilitate the approval of permits, documents and other licenses for investors.

During the signing ceremony last Thursday, Favila said the MOA was meant to enhance the system of linkages and networking between and among government agencies and address the problem of red tape.

Favila explained that under the agreement, the Board of Investments would coordinate with other investment promotion units (IPUs)

GOV'T /B4

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
P47.48 =
As of 5 p.m., April 27, 2007

Stock Market

Stocks seen moving sideways

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

STOCK TRADING THIS WEEK IS EXpected to be influenced mainly by developments abroad and some reports of first quarter earnings, analysts said.

"With no specific positive catalyst until the second week of May when the government releases inflation numbers, we may see investors' [illegible] dependent on global developments. On a technical perspective though, the flow levels may be due for a retracement after posting a strong April performance," AB Capital Securities said in a weekly note to clients.

Joseph Yuson, president of Eagle Equities Inc., said he expected the market bearish to continue, projecting the main price index to rise to the 3,500 level by the end of the year.

AB Capital Securities said that fund managers who were conscious

MARKETS /B2

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US urges gov't to bid telecom project

American envoy notes bias in favor of Chinese firm

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FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

By Dexter L. Lusan

THE US GOVERNMENT, THROUGH its chief representative in Manila, has urged the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to reconsider its bias for a Chinese firm for its controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project.

At the same time, US Ambassador to Manila Kristie A. Kenney also urged the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) to review proposals for the project put forward by American technology firms, at least one of which has already complained about the government's rejection in favor of the Chinese firm.

"Considering the significance of the project to the President's economic agenda, I urge your good offices to award similar basis and take the time to carefully review and consider the multiple expressions of interest that have been submitted, including those submitted by American companies," Kenney said in her letter to Economic Planning Secretary Ronaldo Zeta.

The Neda chief acts as the chairman of President Arroyo when chairing the Cabinet-level Investment Coordinating Council, which is responsible for vetting big-ticket projects involving infrastructure and other government programs.

The NBN project calls to the establishment of a nationwide telecommunications backbone, which will accommodate all the government needs for broadband Internet services, video-conferencing, landline and mobile phone calls, and e-mail requirements.

The plan envisions a network that will connect all government units and agencies from the national to the barangay level, potentially cutting in half the government's estimated P4-billion annual communication expenses.

On his trip to China two weeks ago, President Arroyo sealed a $329-million deal for a Chinese telecommunications firm to fund the project (that still be implemented by Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE Corp.

Kenney urged the government to choose the project's proponent on the basis of merit, contrary to the path it has chosen as per now.

"In sum, competitive environment will allow the Philippine government to find the most advantageous technological solution at the best price," she said.

The decision to hand the project to a Chinese proponent was made without the benefit of a bidding process, with the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) reasoning that a government-to-government deal does not require this—the same line of reasoning used for the equally controversial North Rail project.

Local firm innovation holdings Inc. has offered to build a similar network for P242 million, although DOTC officials have set aside their proposal for allegedly not meeting basic bid requirements.

US-based Amazon Inc. has also offered to build a similar project for only $120 million.

"So in all government procurement projects, we believe open competition and transparency is in the best interest of all," Kenney said.

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Power sale program suspended

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL POWER CORP. HAS SUSPENDED its one-day power sales (ODPS) program due to lack of generation capacity in the Luzon grid.

In a letter sent to ODPS customers, Napocor vice president for sales and services Rose Lotivio said ODPS transactions were suspended from midnight of April 26 until April 27 due to a power supply shortfall declared on April 18.

The supply deficiency was caused by the outage of one of the two units of 600-megawatt (MW) fuel-coal fired power plant in Pangasinan, the tripping of the 370-MW Limay combined-cycle plant in Bataan, and fuel supply constraints on the 735-MW Sual coal fired and 650-MW Ilijan Chemical power plants, he said.

Napocor president Cyril Del Callar earlier said the state-run fuel supply and distribution arm would continue to ensure fuel supply the power requirements of the Luzon grid.

The supply deficiency last April 26, which resulted in soaring kilowatt-hour (kWh) rates in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces, was primarily caused by a sudden spike in demand, he said.

He added that April 10 was the historical day of the year so far and that demand suddenly surged 200 MW beyond the usual time's projections.

The tripping of the Limay plant and the outage of one unit of the Sual plant also took away around 870 GWH from the Luzon grid, he said.

Fuel supply constraints at Pagbilao and Malaya were never mentioned as contributing factors to the April 18 power supply shortfall.

An industry source, however, said the state firm had even resorted to "borrowing" coal from the Sibulan plant in Cebu just to keep Pagbilao running.

Del Callar hailed this, saying most of the fuel supply needs of its own plants and those of its independent power producers had already been contracted as early as December last year.

Stocks seen . . .

From page B3

of changes in the Philippine Stock Exchange index might re-allocate their portfolio as the PSE implements a new index composition by May 30.

It noted that the PSE would be replacing former majority Benguet Holdings and Philippine Long Dist. as well as Semirara Mining Corp. with new entrants: First Gen Corp., Universal Robina Corp. and the reinstatement of Manila Mining Corp.

Major index movers like PLDT, Globe Telecom and Ayala Corp. are expected to make out with five-quarter results toward the second week of May. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucas

Filipino workers, then and now

LABOR DAYS IS UPON US ONCE AGAIN. ARE it hasn't changing how the situation of the Filipino worker has changed—or has not—over the years.

Twenty years ago, we had 20.6 million workers employed; we have 33.1 million now. This means that domestic job generation grew by about 60 percent over the past 20 years, or roughly 3 percent a year—largely reflecting how the overall Philippine population had grown over the years.

About 449,000 overseas contract workers were deployed then; last year, there were about a million contract workers deployed, a 120 percent growth over the past 20 years. In other words, Filipino workers had been looking for abroad about twice as fast as domestic employment had been growing. This suggests that the domestic employment situation would have been so much worse if not for this accelerated pace at which our workers have sought jobs elsewhere.

Workers' profile

What is the profile of Filipino workers, and how has it changed over the years? Based on most available labor and employment statistics, we know that out of every 100 employed Filipinos:

- 50 are earning wages and salaries, 35 are self-employed, and 12 are unpaid family workers. Ten years ago, the breakdown was 49, 39 and 11, respectively.
- 45 are working full time while the other 55 work only part-time (less than 40 hours a week). Ten years ago, 48 would have had full time jobs.
- Half (50) are service sector workers, 35 are in agriculture, and the remaining 15 is in industrial jobs. Twenty years ago, the composition was 38, 47 and 15, respectively.
- 22 (1 in 4) are underemployed or unskilled laborers; 16 are farmers, fishermen or forest workers; 12 are managers in government or a private firm; 10 are service workers, including sales; eight are in trade and related work; eight are equipment operators, five are clerks, and seven are professionals and technicians. Twenty years ago, there would have been 20 laborers, production workers and equipment operators; 17 farmers, fishermen and forest workers; 13 sales workers; nine service workers; six professionals, four clerks, and one manager.

Jobless profile

That breakdown was for those who had jobs. What about the jobless Filipinos?

We also know that for every 10 Filipino workers there's 1 that jobless:

- Two are 15-24 years of age; three are 25-34 years old, and two are 35-44 years.
- One have had at most high school education.

Gov't plans agriculture . . .

From page B3

and other relevant organizations in crafting investment-related issues and concerns affecting foreign and local investors in the Philippines.

The BOI will monitor and document investment-related issues and concerns referred to the IPU network to ensure prompt and accurate response. Clients will be updated on status of referrals made.

The IPUs are tasked to act on investment issues and concerns within 72 hours, improving on the existing government rule that public officials and employees must act on letters and requests not later than 15 working days.

"By this agreement, we are making sure that the government is clearing barriers in the economic growth of the country," Ponla said. "Businessmen will find it easier to locate their operations in the country."

The agencies include the Departments of Trade and Industry, BOI, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of Finance, Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Civil Service Commission;

Department of Agrarian Reform; Department of Agriculture; Department of Energy; Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Department of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Immigration; Department of the Interior and Local Government;

Department of Labor and Employment; Philippine Overseas Employment Administration; Department of Public Works and Highways; Department of Science and Technology; Bureau of Food and Drugs; Department of Tourism; Department of Transportation and Communication;

Commission on Information and Communications Technology; Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board; Manila International Airport Authority; National Commission on Indigenous Peoples; National Intelligence Coordinating Agency; Office of the Ombudsman; and Securities and Exchange Commission.

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

cies, there had gone to college, while one had only reached elementary school.

Our study 18 workers who are underemployed, that is, have a need to work more:

- Six are farm workers; four are service sector workers, and one is an industrial worker.
- Six are working part-time, and four are working full time (40 hours a week).

Sectoral changes

The most dramatic changes have been in the sectoral composition of workers. Twenty years ago, it was convenient to say that one was an agricultural economy, with almost half of our workers in the farming sector. Now, half of our workers are in services, with only 35 percent in agriculture. What has not changed is the proportion working in industry, which has remained stagnant at 15 percent.

Another notable change is the increase in the proportion of unskilled laborers from less than 20 percent to 33 percent over the past 20 years. Now that that 1987 figures lumped in known and transport equipment operators (i.e., driven) together at 20 percent, the comparable figure now is 40 percent.

One thing is sure: the nature of available jobs in the economy has changed markedly over the last 20 years. A lot more are now in jobs requiring little education and skills—a reflection, perhaps, of how the overall state of education has declined in the country?

More managers

But equally noteworthy is the dramatic increase in proportion of managers from one percent to 12 percent. It's not quite sure what to make of this change in data classification may partly explain the change. If this turns out now to be more entrepreneurs to manage, this could be good news. Or it could also mean enterprises are stuck bigger, requiring more extensive management structures. It also reflects a more skewed economy with greater dominance of big business, then of a different picture.

The biggest challenge—and one hasn't changed much in the last 20 years, remains how to employ millions of under-educated youth, who make up the bulk of the unemployed. And most of these people are not in the countryside. Our strategy for jobs creation must decisively address these facts—and not for jobs overseas for their only resource.

Comments are welcome at cfabito@periwinkle.

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Business process outsourcing firm Intelligent Wave all set to go public

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lauron

THE MARKET FOR INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS continues to sizzle, this time with business process outsourcing firm Intelligent Wave Philippines Inc. (Iwp) ready to brave a maiden public debut.

Sources said Iwp is looking to fetch around $5 million from a possible IPO.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Iwp's majority shareholder and provider of information technology firm Diversified Financial Network Inc. said its board had agreed to tap BDO Capital & Investment Corp. as issue manager and lead underwriter for the proposed initial public offer.

Iwp is currently engaged in the business of providing IT business solutions for local and Japanese banks, as well as other financial institutions on an outsourced basis.

The funds to be generated from the IPO will be used to expand Iwp's services and tap the opportunities that will open in Japan, following the Philippines-Japan Free Trade Agreement, said DFNI.

A majority of Iwp's revenue will be derived from BPO contracts from Japanese companies overseas.

DFNI's 75-percent subsidiary Datalink Inc. owns 50 percent of IWP.

Supply contract seen for coal plant on gov't auction block

Contract expected to guarantee sale of 600-MW power facility

By Abigail L. Hu

A SUPPLY CONTRACT FOR 25 PERCENT OF the 600-megawatt (MW) Masinloc coal-fired power plant's dependable capacity may be attached to the plant soon, ahead of its orchard club auction in July.

In an interview, National Power Corp. president Cyril Del Callar said that the state firm has already entrusted to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. its recommendations for the attachment of supply contracts to the Masinloc plant.

"The allocation we will give to actually out on a per megawatt basis, but will be based on the average daily load," Del Callar said. "But, on the average, Pedro allocates the 25 percent of a plant's dependable capacity, or that's probably how it will work with Masinloc."

But even without an attached supply contract, the Masinloc plant in Zambales has been getting a lot of runs from prospective investors during due diligence audit on the facility, he said.

"I'm looking forward to the bidding, especially with the number of site visits that prospective investors have done lately," he said. "We're actually having problems accommodating them in the plant because of their numbers."

Pedro had earlier failed to privatize two big-ticket Napocor assets—the Masinloc and Calaca coal-fired power plants, each rated at 600 MW—because of the lack of power supply contracts assigned to them.

The contracts will ensure ensuring bidders of a ready market for the power that the plants will generate.

The Masinloc plant had actually been sold to YNN Pacific Consortium Inc. three years ago for $561.7 million.

But the group failed to meet the deadline in making the 40 percent payment for the plant up front, resulting in the voiding of the contract to asset purchase agreement with Pedro.

YNN now go another entity, Malaysia's RankHill Berhad, to help it raise the money for the down payment. But the cash was not released due to the absence of a supply contract attached to the plant.

Pedro will be rebidding the Masinloc plant in July and the Calaca plant in Batangas later this year.

Thrift banks pare down soured loans

By Ma.Jude V. Ramos

THE EXPOSURE OF THE THRIFT BANKING industry to soured loans was reduced last February from a year earlier, despite the government's call on banks to be more aggressive in trading, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported Friday.

The BSP said the nonperforming loan ratio of the country's thrift banks improved to 7.68 percent in February from the 8.01 percent recorded in January.

On a year-on-year basis, the NPL ratio in February was also an improvement compared with the 8.91 percent posted in January.

NPL ratio is the percentage share of bad debts to a banking sector's total amount of outstanding loans.

A drop in the NPL ratio means that growth in the total amount of outstanding loans outpaced the growth in soured loans. It can also mean that the decline in bad debts is faster than the drop in the total loan portfolio.

The NPL ratio in February was a result of the P261.141 billion worth of nonperforming loans and the P267.39 billion worth of outstanding loans.

The amount of nonperforming loans in February marked a 1.8 percent drop from the previous month's P265.727 billion.

The amount of soured loans during the nine-month period in P26.041 billion compared with the P23.981 billion recorded in January.

Excluding interbank loans, the NPL ratio of the thrift banking sector likewise showed an improvement. From 9.56 percent in February last year and 9.27 percent last January, the figure eased to 9.02 percent last February.

"Restructuring activities picked up by 0.87 percent during the month of February, pre the proportion of restructured loans (RLs) covered loan portfolio (TLP) went down to 2.09 percent from last month's 2.13 percent as the increase in TLP outpaced the marginal movement in RLs," the BSP said in a statement.

It added that the restructured loans ratio in February was an improvement from the 2.87 percent in the same month last year.

Restructured loans refer to the percentage share of restructured debts to the thrift banking sector's total loan portfolio.

The government, spearheaded by the DOF, over the last few years has been helping the country's banking sector to recover from huge bad debts marked by double-digit NPL ratios.

One of the measures the government introduced to help banks dispose of their bad assets was the granting of tax concessions to transactions involving the sale of bad debts to special purpose vehicles.

The exposure of the banking sector to bad debts was partly blamed on the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s.

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Metrobank net income up

RP's largest posts double-digit increase in 1st quarter

By Michelle V. Ramos

METROBANK, THE COUNTRY'S largest bank in terms of deposits, assets and loans, reported a double-digit increase in its net income in the first quarter from a year ago.

In a disclosure to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the bank said its net income last Sat P1.62 billion in the first three months of the year, rising by 30.11 percent from the P1.25 billion posted in the same period a year ago.

Joshua E. Ang, Metrobank's executive vice president and controller, said the bank's first quarter performance partly resulted from a lower interest rate, which cut interest expense by 15.11 percent year-on-year.

According to Ang, the bank's core loans line also improved after it aggressively promoted its low-cost deposits and an improved deposit mix.

Metrobank said its net interest income in the first quarter reached P3.04 billion, up 5.36 percent from the P2.83 billion in the same period a year ago.

Income from other sources, including securities trading by the treasury department and disposal of assets such as real properties, rose by 14.2 percent year-on-year to P6.16 billion.

"Stronger treasury activities improved net trading and securities gain by 37.39 percent, or P393.29 million, while profits from the sale of bank-owned properties increased by 972.87 million," the bank said in its disclosure.

Metrobank also reported that its income from the lease of its acquired assets for last year by 21.28 percent, or P15.54 million, year-on-year.

Without giving exact figures, the bank also said its total operating expenses recorded a "slight" drop in the first quarter from a year ago. This was partly brought on by the sale of some of its underperforming assets in 2006, which helped lower the amount of provision for credit losses.

The bank said it sold P9.95 billion worth of unperforming assets last year.

Based on audited 2006 financial statements, the value of Metrobank's consolidated assets stood at P685.79 billion, while its total deposits reached P499.88 billion. Its net consolidated loans and receivables was recorded at P385.52 billion last year.

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Corporate mag cites SMIC

SMC INVESTMENTS CORPORATION has been named one of the best companies in the country, according to The Asset Magazine.

In its annual Corporate Governance Rankings for 2007, SMIC rated highly in terms of corporate governance. The results are featured in detail in the April issue of The Asset.

Led by the 51-year-old patriarch Henry Sy, Jr., the SM group is largely managed by the six Sy siblings, who run the different aspects of the business ranging from shopping malls to financial services to property and tourism.

As the business continues to expand, the family has moved to institutionalize the business process. It has created a risk management system and has also passed a conflict of interest code. Recently, it has also set up a committee on enterprise risk management and hired a full-time professional to handle investor relations.

The Asset Magazine's Corporate Governance Ranking is based on a six-month survey conducted from September 2006 to March 2007.

The Asset Magazine is a financial business magazine written for users and providers of financial services in Asia. Established in 1990, The Asset Magazine is published by Asset Publishing & Research Ltd., and is part of The Asset Network, a community of leading corporate and financial executives in Asia.

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National Bookstore goes international; to open HK branch in Sept

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucas

NATIONAL BOOKSTORE INC., the country's biggest bookshop chain, is putting up two branches overseas, one in Hong Kong and another in Guam, this year.

National Bookstore president Alfredo Ramos said the company was planning to open the Hong Kong branch in September. It will be put up at the Times Square property, one of Hong Kong's key landmarks built on top of the airport-railway Mass Transit System.

Ramos estimated that the Hong Kong bookstore would cost between P60 million and P80 million.

Times Square consists of luxury apartments and hotels, an indoor shopping mall, and grade A office spaces. It has a total gross floor area of roughly 1.09 million square metres, as large as Araneta Center's Cubao X mall.

In Guam, National Bookstore will operate in an SM mall, one of the investment projects undertaken by mall operator Henry Sy overseas.

Ramos added that the scheduled of the Guam branch opening had yet to be set.

The Filipino population is said to amount to about 26 percent of the total population of Guam.

In the Philippines, the bookstore has a network of 87 stores nationwide. It has another 11 stores bearing other group brands such as the following: Powerbooks (16), NBS Express (7) and Smartbox (1).

Ramos said there was no rush for the company to join the bandwagon of those building initial public offerings.

"There are no plans to build an IPO at this time. Personal ecstasies critical issues to go public. What we are doing is we are starting out to international boundaries. If those models then that might be the time to think of going public," Ramos said.

Founded by Socorro Cancio Ramos and the late Jose Ramos, the first National Book Store started in the 1950s before the Japanese occupation as a mail to Eureka selling supplies, 12 records, and notebooks. During the 1950s, the business thought of producing a line of greeting cards and post cards with a Philippine motif. Later on, it acquired the Philippine translation for Hallmark cards. It was also at this time that the couple began a publishing program with the help of international publishers such as McGraw-Hill, Prentice Hall, Lippincott and Addison-Wesley.

Between 1955 and 1970, National Bookstore expanded rapidly to sixty stores nationwide.

Gov't net borrowings exceed Q1 target

Target for 2007 set at P82.52B

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S FIRST quarter net borrowings, or the amount of new funds contracted less payments for maturing obligations, exceeded the ceiling set for the period.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that net borrowings in the first three months to March hit P66.78 billion, surpassing the ceiling of P52.185 billion by P13.55 billion.

The net borrowings for the first quarter is already accounted for 96 percent of the P69.52 billion net for the whole 2007.

The net borrowings in the period were a result of the P343.208 billion worth of gross borrowings and the P86.43 billion worth of payments for liabilities that fell due.

The government resorts to borrowing to cover the budget gap and any maturing debts.

The government's budget deficit for P52.2 billion in the first quarter, higher than the government's target of only P42.43 billion. The overshooting of the target, which was despite under-spending, was primarily due to the shortfall in tax collections.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue blamed slower than-expected inflation and heart-beating of production by cigarette firms for failing to meet the tax collection target.

Slower inflation means consumer prices grow by an amount smaller than expected, therefore resulting in lower than targeted collections of value-added tax, the BIR said.

The revenue-collecting agency also said cigarette manufacturers already produced a huge volume in December to avoid paying higher excise taxes. The implementation of the higher excise tax rate started in January.

Of the P86.43 billion payment made in the first quarter, P15.945 billion went to foreign lenders while P70.486 went to domestic creditors.

Of the P191.208 billion worth of gross borrowings on the first quarter, P91.227 billion came from foreign markets and government securities/bonds, while P40.881 billion billion was incurred from domestic sources of credit.

The fresh foreign borrowings were bigger than the drawdowns obligations as the government completed its January 10 foreign commercial borrowing program for the year.

The year's foreign borrowing plan was set at $1 billion. This was raised through the recent floatation of $1 billion worth of global bonds.

For the remaining three quarters of the year, most of the government's borrowings will come from domestic sources, largely through the issuance of treasury bills and bonds.

2 small oil firms seek better Customs monitoring system

INDEPENDENT OIL IMPORTERS are calling for a better and more accurate system of monitoring tax payments at the Bureau of Customs to avoid erroneous computations and limitations of penalties.

Manuel Limcaoco Inc. (MIC) and Indue Enterprises Inc. (AIE) asked the call after the Customs singled them out for allegedly underdeclaring their oil importation.

"All of our import transactions are above-board as evidenced by the approval of Customs and BIR before and after the cargo shipments arrived," said the two oil firms in a statement.

MIC joined the oil industry in 1997 when the government deregulated the oil sector to allow the entry of small and independent players.

From 2003 to 2005, MIC was consistently ranked among the top 1,000 corporations of the Philippines.

In order to have its own supply of low-cost diesel independent of other suppliers, MIC and AIE invested in a new 18 million-liter petroleum storage facility in Tayug, Batangas, called the Batangas Petroleum Terminal Inc. (BPTI).

Recently, BPTI had been organized with the Board of Investments and was accorded investors and perks for five years.

The two firms said BPTI's terminal facilities enabled them to import petroleum at significantly low prices from various reliable traders and suppliers, which have expertise in hedging, forward contracts, volume driven incentives, and prompt payment discounts that have enabled them to offer petroleum products at low prices.

"Unfortunately, Customs' seemingly inability so to bin our imports at competitive prices. To say that we undervalued our shipments is not only misleading but unfair," Manuel explained.

According to BOC documents, the values declared by MIC and AIE in all shipments made are reflected in the records and documentation of the BOC were the same values reflected in the commercial invoices and bill of lading entries with their respective suppliers.

The firms said oil products which are imported from the same country or even with the same supplier by oil companies here in the Philippines are not necessarily the same. Depending on the terms given to each and every importer by these suppliers or requesting companies, prices may greatly differ.

SuperFerry announces summer promo package

By Rina T. Dizhonden

TO BE ABLE TO COMPETE WITH other promotional packages for the summer season, SuperFerry has revived its 'Sulit-Sulit 2nd Sale' campaign with lower prices and the benefit of open-dated tickets.

The buying period is from May 1 to 7 and the travel period for the open-dated tickets is from June 15 to Oct. 15, 2007.

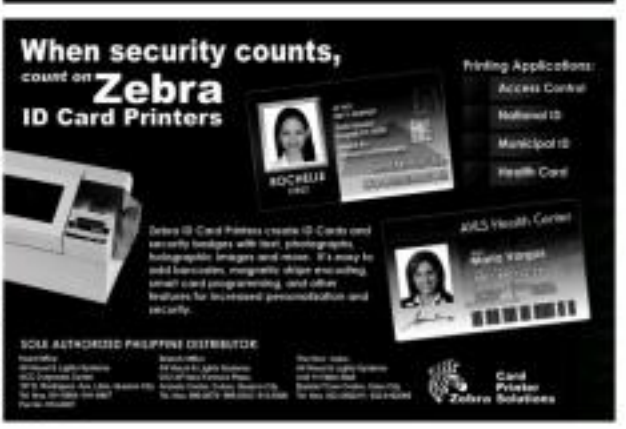
A ticket from Manila to the Visayas now sells for P699, while a ticket from Manila to Mindanao sells for P749. The same rates apply to return routes.

Tourist ports are Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan, Iligan, Davao, Dipolog, General Santos, Iloilo, Butuan, Puerto Princesa and Zamboanga.

Mindanao ports are Cagayan, Cotabato, Davao, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Butuan, Puerto Princesa and Zamboanga.

"Our newly available open-dated tickets give our customers the opportunity to take advantage of our sale prices with the flexibility of confirming their travel dates at a later time," said Isidoro Sevilla, SuperFerry vice-president for marketing and sales.

"All advertised fares are inclusive of fuel and 12-percent value added tax. It does not include the terminal fee, Supervisory Insurance fee and security fee. Rina T. Dizhonden



DA sees good year ahead for hog, chicken sectors

Production to rise in '07 as export markets open up

THE HOG INDUSTRY is stepping up efforts to increase production to take advantage of rising demand from local and foreign markets.

By Jerry S. Perez

THE SWINE AND CHICKEN INDUSTRIES are now ready prospects this year with the projected increase in production and the opening up of new export markets, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The hog industry, which accounts for 14.3 percent of the P950-billion agriculture sector, expects production this year to increase to 1.9 million metric tons, a slight 4-percent increase from last year's 1.84 million metric tons.

Major growth areas include Mindanao, Occidental Mindoro, Cagayan, Nueva Ecija and Zamboanga Sibugay.

Production of chicken, meanwhile, which is the third largest contributor to agriculture, is expected to hit 1.34 million metric tons this year from last year's 1.21 million metric tons.

Last year's gross output value for chickens was P81.06 billion, contributing 8.23 percent to the total value of agriculture.

Major growth areas for chicken include Pangasinan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quezon and Iloilo.

"For the next three years, we expect the industry to grow by 5 percent annually," Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said.

The chicken industry is looking at continued strategic disease control, surveillance, quarantine and a sustained infrastructure and education campaign to prevent Philippine borders from avian flu.

The hog industry, on the other hand, is banking on keeping Aujeszky's disease, Nipah, Foot-and-Mouth disease from their soil (tooth disease is certified by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Visayas and Mindanao have been declared OIE-free for more than a decade and Luzon, for more than a year.

Another program calls for the intensified hog cholera eradication and control, particularly in Mindanao, to enhance export potentials.

Only around 2 percent of the country's total meat production is being exported – in the form of hot, chicken meat, pork and beans, hotdog, pulutan, pork adobo, satay, chili con carne and dried tapsilog – to the United States and the Middle East, among others.

The department is now eyeing new export markets, such as China for boar processed poultry meat; the European Union, Hong Kong, and Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei processed chicken to Hong Kong, Japan, United States, Dubai, Bahrain and Muscat (as) and fresh frozen poultry to UAE and Japan.

By July this year, the Philippines is also set to export 200 metric tons of fresh and frozen meat to Singapore, the world's top meat importer.

The country is also eyeing Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and China as potential export markets.

Fisheries group claims JPEPA will lead to death of fishing industry

By Bonnie W. Domingo

A FISHERIES ADVOCACY GROUP has criticized the pending Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) that it could lead to the collapse of the local fishing industry.

In a position paper, the Tambuyong Development Center said the JPEPA carries the threat of overfishing and trade of endangered species.

Tambuyong said that while there are no fishery access agreement between Japan and the Philippines, Japanese commercial fishing may be allowed under JPEPA's terms.

Tambuyong said that under JPEPA, areas where investments and services may be undertaken will include the territorial waters of the country and its exclusive economic zone.

"So in priority goods, the fisheries sector is again listed in the government's 2007 list of investment priorities of the Philippine government, with shrimp and other aquaculture products, tuna – a product of concern[ ] fishing – topping the list of priority products for exports," Tambuyong said.

"This is an incentive that, coupled with JPEPA, can lead to increasing commercial fishing activities to the coming years," the group added.

"This development will have adverse impacts on the sustainability of local marine resources that, according to experts, have reached their maximum sustainable yield back in the 1990s and are now increasingly overfished," it said.

Further, Tambuyong said the JPEPA contained unfair provisions, including Granting Japanese goods, services and investments as if these were [Equine National treatment], which removes limits to foreign ownership of businesses.

"On top of this, Japanese fisheries investors are not required to transfer technology to Filipinos and neither are they required to hire any number of locals," Tambuyong said.

"Philippine negotiators have agreed that we do not have any defensive interests in agriculture and fisheries," the group said. "But the JPEPA provisions pose a threat to both local capital and the sustainability of resources.

The government, on the other hand, is pushing for the approval of JPEPA in Congress, saying it will lead to economic growth because of increased trade and investments from Japan, the world's second biggest economy.

Tambuyong, meanwhile, said JPEPA provides for the lifting of the Philippines' protective barriers to trade while Japan was free to maintain its own.

"Japan remains protective of many fishery products that are caught locally especially by local fishers," Tambuyong said. "[Meanwhile,] Philippine protects like sardines, mackerel, anchovies, cuttlefish and seaweed are excluded in the JPEPA schedule of tariff reductions by Japan."

Moreover, the JPEPA schedules on tariff elimination excludes endangered species like the manatee, dugongs, whales and dolphins, Tambuyong said.

NAIA 3 terminal not likely to open this year

Miaa, Takenaka to haggle on unfinished Naia 3 work

By Rico T. Gichamba

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Authority (Miaa), which oversees the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 (Naia 1), will hold discussions with civil works contractor Takenaka Corp. today on the extent and cost of repairs that need to be done on the idle terminal.

The two sides are expected to haggle on the price of the work and on who should undertake it.

No agreement would enable the two sides to sign a pending construction work agreement on the repair and completion work, leading to the operation of the terminal.

The pre-opening inspections by TCG Engineers Inc. and Dee Ong & Partners (DCG), last year, found that the Naia 3 had structural defects.

The experts said the facility may not stand an intensity-six earthquake and recommended repair work on the beams, girders and post-tension cables, as well as columns and piles.

Takenaka denied responsibility for the repairs in March, but Miaa claimed that the firm – the new still under warranty and in the Japanese firm should take care of the work.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza, however, said Miaa could not complete the repair work and charge it to the contractor later.

Mendoza added that the Naia 3 will not likely open this year as earlier planned, regardless of who undertakes the unfinished work.

The transport chief said that even if repair is completed by October, airlines will have a hard time transferring to Naia 3 until the peak tourist season begins late December.

"Airline companies would not want their operation to be affected," he said.

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IN THIS ISSUE
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LIFESTYLE

Editor Cleda Barad-Perfecto
Associate Editor Lito B. Zulueta

INDIGENOUS artwork

National Heritage Month goes bamboo

By Amanda Mia Guerrero
Contributor

IT'S MAY. IT'S MAY, THE LUSTY month of May/that shocking time of year, when men of wicked little thoughts merrily appear...," trilled soprano Julie Andrews in Lerner and Loewe's musical play "Camelot."

Now, here in the Philippines, May-time is not shocking at all. It is, in fact, the month of flowers, of Mama Mary and the cultural-religious procession Santacruzan.

In our youth in Intramuros, Manila, little girls dressed in white would offer flowers to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin. (I wonder if this beautiful Catholic practice is still being observed today.)

May is also the National Heritage Month, with its month-long festival of exhibits, performances, tours, processions, parades and poetical events celebrating our historical landmarks and traditions.

The theme for this year is "The Culture and Traditions of Bamboo," and the events are being held under the auspices of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Department of Tourism.

In a recent press conference at Hotel Intercontinental in Makati, NCCA commissioner Ernie Aunzo, observed that "with democracy now functioning (evident rather with elections), it is more necessary than ever to know our heritage. We have forgotten our heritage, it is time to relearn it."

He added: "Our heritage is endless, like the bamboo. So, as Filipinos always is. ..."

The festival unveiled with a concert featuring the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band in Rizal Park, right beside the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), April 28. Actual opening ceremonies will be held April 30-May 2 in Tacloban City.

Landmarks exhibit

The first week of May will consist of a Philippine landmarks exhibit in Lipa City, participants from various artists using bamboo instruments at the CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo; launching of Manoc Pedo Hotel in Davao City; performance of Banda Kawayan at the Manila Metropolitan Museum; exhibit of the ceiling paintings of Bohol churches at Gaisano Museo in Lungsod City; tour of Laguna for ambassadors; lightshow exhibit at Santa Rosa Museum in Laguna; Bonsai tours at Rajah Sulaiman Plaza, Fort Santiago, Manila; Mayon at noise exhibit at Aklan's showcase's Galleria, with Banda Kawayan at hand; and an Ibaloy-flavored food festival at Mandaluyong Orientel, Makati.

ANTHROPOLINGUISTIC family at the mall exhibit

PROUDLY Filipino at Divisoria

As the festival gets underway, the second week will witness a lightshow exhibit at the Manila City Hall Quadrangle; fun-run-jeep with traditional ngoyoh dance in Marikina; Bukayo: vintage jazz with Mon Tauriel and Yeo; Tayuman at Esperanza CDC; exhibit of Bohol churches at Makati Museum; way of Pasig River; food festival at Aklan; Bisaya Lu Akad; and an exhibit of Chinese and Filipino traditional medicine at Ilalay Tabang in Intramuros, Manila.

The third and fourth weeks of May will showcase an exhibit of colonial bridges and the launch of heritage stamps at Glorietta, Makati; concierto d'trad/intramuros at Las Piñas Church, home of the only bamboo organ in the world; "Kawayanihan" exhibit and Hagonoy food festival at three municipalities; Pinoy Moderno fashion show at the SM Dasmariñas; a bamboo-influenced exhibit, "Unlimited" heritage tours; and a bamboo concert, all in Silay City and later at Victorias, Negros Occidental; National Artists exhibit at Robinsons Place, Manila; Pampanga tour; "Bisa, Patubili, un (Our Heritage) show at Robinson's Bacolod City; parol-(pollinate) parade along Rizal Ave.; and a Basque Show exhibit complemented by Bataan Ghosts Folklore Group dancers at The Podium.

Closing ceremonies, with varied activities along the way, will be held in Cagayan Valley, May 25-29, with the Cagayanons welcoming the arrival of the Spaniards at Igang, commemorating the historic town's ninth anniversary.

A Ben Barredo fashion show at Plaridel Hotel, Cebu, will cap the festival on May 31.

"We will be celebrating Philippine culture from north to south," said Aranza Rufino, president of Philippine Heritage Festival, Inc.

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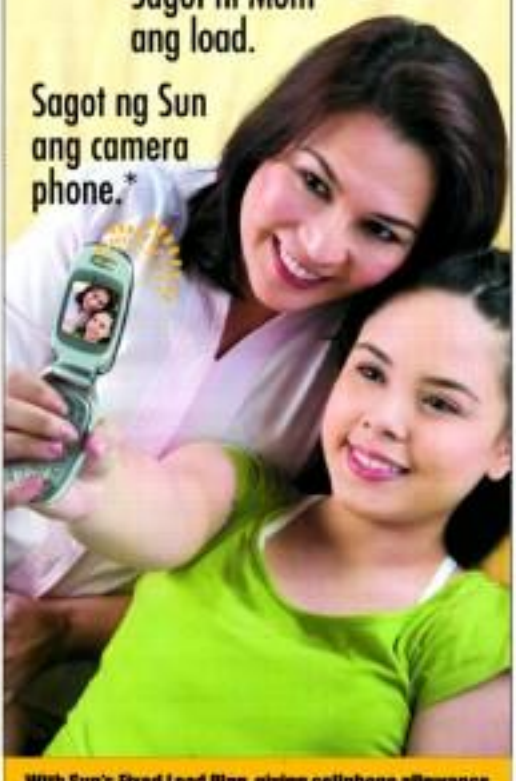

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PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

Church 'over-beautification': Will it ever stop?

ALONG THE SEMIC ILOCO coastline continues to stand massive fortress-churches dating from the Spanish colonial regime. Imposing and prominent on seaside promontories, they are powerful icons of Spanish-influenced Catholicism and unmistakably convey the might of the Spanish empire.

Since the days of early Catholicism, bells rang from church towers to announce to the faithful Masses, christenings, weddings and deaths, bell towers also served another purpose: as lookouts to detect maritime invasions.

Church bells rang either for real and holy, or for religious and municipal control. Gabot (dawn) signaled the moment of resurrection during Mass; enemy approach, even an evacuation of villagers settling to the foothill strongholds.

Settlements were arranged base on its campana, dwellings spread in an area within hearing radius of the bells, to ensure that the population could be rallied quickly and effectively. And for the faithful to be counselled.

Both hell fissure and magnificent Philippine Baroque churches majestically positioned by the ocean are part of the stereotypical Pinoy image, although we are off by clear sky blue coast or brown, steep sandstone, seasonal siren carrying, long beaches, expansive blue waters sparkling all the way towards the horizon. That's what has clung to the traditional psyche for generations.

It's in my psyche, too. Infidelity. That image is too deeply lived in by local inter-childhood, difficult to shake off because of its association with youthful holidays and carefree times.

So imagine my delight to be invited to a Sunday morning drive along the coastline where each town to the west of Iloilo City (Oton, Tigbauan, Guimbal, Miag-ao and San Joaquin) invariably has antique border lace vigilant church. Its rapidness, as I remembered it, intensified as churches became grander as you approached the Antique border.

To prevent church overdose, I asked to see only two that dug a "beautified" church and an "un-beautified" one, still in its authentic state that I presumed (wrongly) to be Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church in Miag-ao, because of its inscription on the World Heritage List that entitles it to be among the world's sacred gems requiring proper conservation.

Accurately, any church or heritage structure for that matter, is a member of World Heritage outline of use, requires proper conservation. That day I learned not a few things about the true relevance of that statement in the Philippines.

The first church I was taken to was in the town of Tigbauan.

Tigbauan's church

Built by the Agustinian priests, the present Church of San Juan de Sahagun in Tigbauan dates from 1867, built to replace an earlier church. The town church was "spacious but dark," writes Fr. Pedro Galende.

When we came into full view of the church facade and its attached convento (destroyed in 1984, replaced with a concrete structure), I strained double. Although the facade stones were degenerated [1], (façade) influences, perhaps blended into one, signified Mexican Plateresque style," continues Galende), a concrete lip painted white around the arched main door gave it all away.

The one the "beautified" one.

And beautified it was, certainly "spacious and dark" it's not. Behind the dried façade was an entirely new structure, soaring full high by open steel trusses, walls replaced by floor-to-ceiling openings. The altar, with the retablo removed, now stood beneath a blue-paint groove that seemed to be submerged, its elongated dried shape rumored to what appeared to be remains of some kind.

Old me want to disturb the Sunday Mass going on. I confine my spend reading of the interior to from a distance, standing behind a side door farthest from the altar.

Beside me was the order of the day in Tigbauan, and Dumangas (as in the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice) seemed to be the architectural style of inspiration. The original metal stone lining of the church, cut into tiny pieces and colored, covered gradually every interior surface. Into the like vision of the Cruz story of mosaic. Tropical folk Byzantine was the inhibitors.

If the reality of remodeling a 140-year-old heritage structure—getting it out and turning its stone into little pieces—was not so horrifying to me, I would have been delighted with the multiply textured, multicolored explosions of folk-art mosaics.

If only they mosaic-ed something else, not a heritage structure, maybe a plain functional-purpose bath a new structure just aching to be enclosed in multicolored mosaic, there may have still been a heritage Tigbauan church today plus a first-class folk-art structure destined to be On heritage of tomorrow.

Miag-ao's skin-deep beauty

After Tigbauan, next stop was Miag-ao.

Dominated folk-art endeavor in a Philippine Baroque setting distinguishes the façade of Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church, inscribed on the World Heritage List as "...an outstanding example of the Philippine interpretation of a Mexican architectural style."

Carved in high relief, its façade is a masterpiece. With well-chiseled, elaborate craftsmen carved a stunning juxtaposition of botanic, tassels, curago, tassels and vines attributes any of the artistic outbreak imposed by the disciples of Ulmanes-ism.

On the carved panel of the façade, St. Christopher, clad in Atchan's rolled-up trousers, carries Divine Child on his back while holding on to a bolt-resistant tree for support, surrounded by saints and papaya trees (ornamental ones and ripened kalamansi. It's just absolutely superb. What more can anyone ask for?

The same carvers Pinatera Catholic leaning rights with a full representation of the Bible countryside. The façade is in the Filipino master-piece," "Among Landscapes and Colored Land. truths" (2005) offering.

Hang on: beauty is unfortunately skin-deep. Despite stringent World Heritage guidelines that Philippine government authorities must uphold,

the church interior remained to escape the high state of conservation required for accumulation of its global stature.

Dilabed marble covers the floor is now, over-gilded, middle shines to high heavens. Old windows have been cut open to floor height, concrete (a modern material totally incompatible with and damaging to adjacent limestone interior) bulges out in, and cuts down installed. The source of interior walls scraped away, stench growth odor-ferred stone patterns.

The landscape was still church, sky, beach, and sea, just as I remembered it. However, that morning I learned how responsible it is to avoid church overdose, that Philippines, after spot remotely cherished and after just two visits.

The days of ad-hoc church "beautification" may be over. The Philippine government and the Holy See have signed an, with a very heavy hand, Pope, expressly regulate this conservation of church heritage.

A historic conservation agreement, the first of its kind ever signed by the Republic of the Philippine and the Holy See, seeks tighter control on preservation of church heritage.

Signed on April 17 by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and Apostolic Nuncio Fernando Filoni, the agreement pledges the cooperation of both states in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

Objects covered by the agreement are only the 26 Spanish colonial churches declared as National Treasures and legally protected by the republic. Statuettes, artifacts and libraries belonging to ecclesiastical institutions and organizations.

Therefore, both the Republic of the Philippines acting through the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Holy See represented by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) will agree upon prayer methods of conservation, appreciation and use of the church cultural heritage.

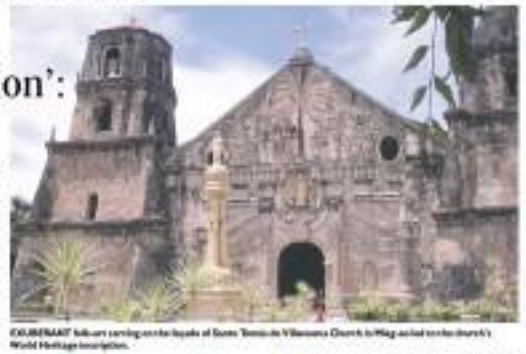
When will the still-unsigned implementing agreement's coverage to include very rigorous measures to prevent all church heritage in the Philippines from vanishing so rapidly?

Heritage watch

The construction of the Philippine Normal University Sports Complex raises humongous property questions.

A complaint was filed against PEA general manager Reberto Lazaro Bautista by former PEA GM Lilia Bautista and Atty. Jesus Ruiz, who cited the administration's violation of PD 1415 which states the Intramuros administration must have coordination of appropriations and control for all new constructions. The ongoing construction has no permit.

Feedback is welcome at pride.place@gmail.com



EXUBERANT folk-art carving on the façade of Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church in Miag-ao lead to the church's World Heritage inscription.

FOREIGN Secretary Alberto Romulo and Apostolic Nuncio Fernando Filoni sign the historic agreement between the Philippines and the Holy See on sacred heritage.

THE WHITE concrete lip around the new entrances to the Tigbauan church and the crassness concrete attached to the church facade devour the heritage structure.

COLORED stone walls and windows salvaged from doors cheaper the Miag-ao church and show Tigbauan dumped for its World Heritage status.

GOODBYE, heritage. The original coral stone facing of the Tigbauan church was sliced into small pieces, colored, and reused as patterned mosaic. Very inappropriate.

FOLK ART proper, while a colorful Indo-garden delight, is inappropriate.

New movements in liturgical design

SAMOMSONG, SHEVA VIRGINIA, is the ecclesiastical seat of the Diocese of Romblon Diocese headed by Bishop Ramon B. Villena.

The Cathedral of Romblon is under the titular patronage of St. Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Order of Preachers. It is a virtual corner of both, where the tradition of sound worship and private devotions desire.

Bishop Villena takes an active part in keeping the faith alive. And he feels changes & improvements are called for by the Basilica of the cathedral.

The structure has had its share of disrepair and renovations through the years. To satisfy the clamor of the faithful for further improvements, the bishop has ordered the setting up of a new adoration chapel. Commissioned to design the chapel is Jesuit-trained liturgical arts designer Antonio S. Arbiol Jr.

A month-caught after designer, Adriano hews to ecclesiastical regulations and principles on liturgical design. He also makes sure its new chapel is in style.

Sometimes, the bishop has ordered the setting up of a new adoration chapel. Commissioned to design the chapel is Jesuit-trained liturgical arts designer Antonio S. Arbiol Jr.

A month-caught after designer, Adriano hews to ecclesiastical regulations and principles on liturgical design. He also makes sure its new chapel is in style.

The new chapel is rectangular, the adoration chapel was created to the left side of the main altar. Here Tony has proposed a design that would unify it with the side altars, now completed.

The basic structure is rectangular to the baroque period. The lower section of the altar displays four columns of the Ionic order, with influences of the Greek Revival style through the use of cupola-type cascading.

In between are panels filled with hand-carved cut-leaves and acanthus leaves swirling in and about the entire panel.

The center panel shows a carving of the chalice and host amid a cascade of grapes, wheat and vines. Overhead a "IHS" in symbolizes Christ, the center of all public worship and adoration.

The upper section is composed of three panels. Each is separated by columns which do not depart from the traditional design of having clerestin as its capital. The heavenly beings look around "God of Gods."

Designs of acanthus leaves are at the base. In between these are panels in the Greek Revival style. Stylized jars are placed on top of the molding, unifying each of the parts into a cohesive whole.

The center with an elevation houses the Monstrance, which has a glass panel front. Departing from the traditional arch is a compound of curved semi-lunes and running moldings at the top. The triangular forms above the eyes to the viewer of the eye to place, toward the object of one's adoration: the Monstrance.

To give the whole monument the majesty and grandeur it deserves, it will be gilded in stimulate carvings so as not to hurt the eyes, but just leave the faithful and the worshippers in awe. Arbiol said.

FOREMOST liturgical designer Antonio S. Arbiol

ADMIRED'S wood reredos: Easter altar design for the Monstrance Santuario de Gala Church in Ermita, Manila

'Sa Ngalan ng Anak' from Dulaang UP

DULAANG UP (UP COLOPHON) in collaboration with the Office for Initiatives in Culture and the Arts (OICA), National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), is staging "Sa Ngalan ng Anak," a 75-minute monologue by Jerry Bellaflor, the winner of an anonymous playwriting competition. The winning entry was chosen from among 100 entries submitted by aspiring playwrights.

Bellaflor, a graduate of the Philippine Normal University, is a former overseas Filipino worker. His play is based on his experience as an OFW in Saudi Arabia.

The play portrays how an individual is responsible not only for his own family, but also to a bigger family: his country. And that the richness that we value, we must see how

mobile we missionaries exist are to be, may end up causing everyone more damage than good.

Catch "Sa Ngalan ng Anak" on May 2-5 and 9-13 at 7 p.m. and 18 a.m., and 3 p.m. on May 6, 5, 13 and 13, at The Wilfredo Ma. Guerrero Theater, UP Diliman, Quezon City. For call 426-6255 or 981-8500 local 3406/3458. Visit www.upd.edu.ph/~dup.

Sansó's idyllic summer images

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED artist Jeremiel Sansó was recently awarded the distinguished Cross of Isabela for his outstanding accomplishments in the arts by Spanish King Juan Carlos.

The special award is also in recognition of the artist's exemplary work across national boundaries, and is akin to a knighthood or to the Most Ion of the British Empire (MBE) given by the Queen of England.

Last June 2006, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Merit from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In honor of this accomplishment, Galerie Raphael (2/F, Serendra Piazza Mall, 4th Bonifacio Global City; tel. 8562824) is holding a special exhibit of works by Sansó.

Opening on May 4 at 7 p.m., "Summer" features 40 of Sansó's paintings in acrylic on canvas and acrylic on paper. The exhibit runs until May 16. The preview for interested parties starts April 30.

Summer is a subject very close to Sansó's heart. In a child growing up in pre-war Manila, he spent several memorable summers swimming in the Pasig River or in the mountain creeks of Montalban during family outings.

The violence and horror of World War II traumatized the young painter, and his earlier paintings reflect his own struggle with dark emotions and overwhelming grief.

But the dark clouds gradually gave way to light in the works of Sansó in the early 1960s when, upon the invitation of Yves Le Dantec and Isabelle Sicault, he would spend summers in the Le Dantec family's summer villa in the seacoast of Brittany, France.

The seaside sojourns with the Le Dantec family proved to be such a tranquil and healing time for the young artist, and has inspired many of his most enduring works.

Among the paintings included in the upcoming "Summer" exhibit are: "The Warmth of Summer," "Golden Reflections," "With Generous Sunlight," "Surf," "Crimson Advance" and "Celestial Fire."

SANSÓ'S graphic mastery shows in every work

SANSÓ'S sense of color is impeccable.

JUMENAL, Sansó's striking Brittany landscape

Botolan, Zambales holds cultural dance festival

THE RUSTIC TOWN OF BOTOLAN, Zambales relives its Spanish-era culture of dance as it stages the seventh Dramendalok Festival, April 28 to May 4.

Literally meaning dance in the Zambal language, Dramendalok is a Spanish-influenced creative dance for children. Dance steps depict courtship, religious beliefs, thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, and contests for the entertainment.

Barrios lend trainers of Dramendalok to choose the best Dinga-Dalupay, dilimas-Berry, and Mambo-la Dantayan.

A month before the fiesta, trainers gather the village dancers and start teaching the steps of the Dramendalok accompanied by clapping and singing.

Dancers wear flirting costumes—ribbons adorned the girls, while the boys wore prince-like attire as local musicians provided the accompaniment.

Storytelling in Botolan means Bagtilo Day, when tortured the age-old dances, the festival relives the tradition of entertainment which has been neglected for decades.

The festival's highlight is on May 4 with a grand street parade, a street dance competition, a religious procession, and the celebration of the feast of Santa Monica and the 100th anniversary of the founding of Dramendalok.

DOMINGDOK street dancers. Below, image of Santa Monica, patroness of Botolan town

The modern version of Dramendalok will also feature indigenous dances of the Ayta tribes.

There will be entertainment-oriented events such as the Mister ng Botolan Fortune pageant, a battle of the bands and a special evening concert for bold-beans with crooner Bobby Ansal, original member of The Hunters quintet.

There will also be various sporting events, trade fairs and tarsia exhibitions.

Top end the festival will also showcase the town's cultural and tourist attractions—the 300-year old Santa Monica Church, pristine beaches, enchanting waterfalls, wildlife gardens, a view of Mount Pinatubo, and the shrine of the Sta Penog Bato, one of the country's oldest Marian images.

Call (047) 511-8222 for details.

A fiesta of choices for shoppers at 6 SM malls

SM Supermalls – from up north in Baguio City to down south in Davao City – welcome the festive month of May with an impressive six-mall event on the weekend of May 4, 5 and 6.

Participating in the simultaneous May 4, 5 and 6 sale event are SM Megamall, SM City Bacoor, SM City Batangas, SM City Baguio, SM City Clark, and SM City Davao.

The sale offers shoppers a smorgasbord of choices on a wide array of stores, merchandise and services marked down to as low as half their regular prices.

Every P500 single-receipt purchase at any participating anchor store or mall establishment entitles shoppers to join the raffle-cum-text promotion for a chance to win one of 20 Xtreme Version 9 Vokiee Microphones.

Where to Go for Lifestyle Shopping

SM Megamall is the ideal one-stop lifestyle shopping destination. Besides the wide range of merchandise and services, SM Megamall also features the following:

- **Cybermac**, the coolest place to get wired to the latest gadgets and gizmos.
- **SM Cinema** has *Spider-Man 3*, summer's biggest movie, starting May 1.
- **Hogsteig**, the "in" place to please for eats and drinks.
- **SM Foodcourt**, where there's always something yummy for everyone. Now thru May 30, get the chance to win a **trip to Hong Kong & Disneyland** with any P01 or P02 value meal purchase inclusive of a Sm ml Pepsi product. Draw date is on May 16.
- **Mall hours will be extended up to 11 pm on May 4 and 5.**

One-Stop Family Shopping

SM City Bacoor offers exciting half-price markdowns during its May 4, 5 and 6 sale event. Participating stores include **Toy Kingdom, Watsons, SM Supermarket, Ace Hardware, SM Appliance Center, Surplus Shop** and **SM Department Store**.

On-going at **SM Cinema** Bacoor is the "One, Two, Three, FREE!" promo. Moviegoers in groups of 3 get 4 tickets for the price of 3. This offer is valid only during the 3-DAY SALE. So watch *Spider-Man 3* starting May 1.

Grand Fireworks Display

SM City Batangas will light up the summer nights with the grandest fireworks display ever at 8 pm on May 4, 5 and 6. Shoppers and their families can go to the open parking near the Banco de Oro entrance where they can better view the fireworks spectacle.

Hot Finds at Cool Prices

SM City Baguio offers residents and tuburanians choice buys at great discounts of up to 50% on selected merchandise including apparel, health and beauty products, home furnishings, imported items and do-it-yourself tools. All these – and more – are yours for the choosing as you shop in a picturesque hilltop setting.

Central Luzon's Shopping Paradise

SM City Clark offers super finds for discriminating shoppers – quality merchandise, fabulous eat-out options, and fun happenings.

Visit SM City Clark's **Cybermac** for the latest gadgets, games, mobile phones and other cool techie stuff! All up for grabs at the *Zone*!

At **SM Foodcourt**, *Dine & Play* with the whole family and instantly get 2 free rides or games at **Worlds of Fun** when you purchase at least P150 from any SM Foodcourt tenant. Hurry, promo ends June 30!

Join Pepsi's Ring-Iner-Win with any food purchase from SM Foodcourt and get a chance to share the your prize. Premiere items from Pepsi are at stake.

At **SM Cinema**, catch the screening of *Spider-Man 3* starting May 1. Buy two movie tickets and get one FREE on your next visit.

Weekend Fun Down South

Enjoy shopping at **SM City Davao**, offering lots of items on discount from SM affiliates and mall stores.

Eat out in **SM Foodcourt** or the mall's many restaurants in between your shopping.

Watch *Spider-Man 3* with the whole family starting May 1. Shopping fun extended to 12 midnight on May 5. Catch The Company's *Annie* now repertoire from Aug. 1 to 31.

SM Advantage Special

All SM Advantage & SM Prestige members can enjoy an exclusive one-hour shopping special with extra discounts & savings on great selections! Offer good at SM Supermalls' Main Delights Bacoor, Davao, Batangas, Baguio and Clark, from 10am to 11 noon on May 4 only!

LIFESTYLE

Felix Amoncio's blooming art

"WHISPERS and KISSES"

"COLORFUL Mexico"

"BLOOM and Rest"

"SWEET and Steady"

"COLORFUL Peace"

"FLOWER Harvest"

Lyte-Boon Felix Amoncio's latest works shall be featured in L/of Gallery at Sevenoaks, Bloemfontein Global City, starting April 28.

Though his departure is highly reminiscent of Magnesse-Kroll, his style differs in that the abstract angular and boxy works and subtraction betray his admiration for Chris Gheesle's figures.

His working females are busy with flowers in process reminiscent during the mural era of Botticelli.

Amoncio has maintained the relaxed and rather enjoyable routine of his subjects and their jobs. Using warm tones of yellow, orange and red, he presents tasks not as thankless toil but as some sort of pleasant, lucrative frolic.

"Colorful Peace" is on view until May 6. Call 893-1111.

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JOSS ASHER

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY — BY RY. JUNIOR

RUTTS — BY PATRICK FUDGENHELL

LOVEBUGS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

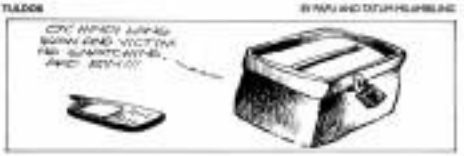
ATOMIC ANDY WOODY — BY LYNN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PANELENG

BIKO NACHIRE — BY FRANCO ASHER

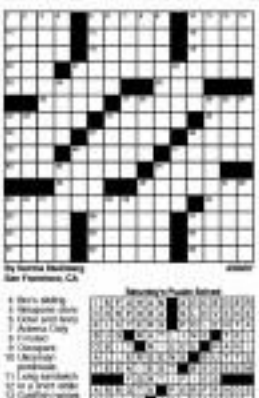
HUKBONGHOS — BY JOHN E TESEO

TULOOK — BY PAPU AND DEVON PELAMBLANC



BEEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

6	5				8	3	9	
3		2	1					8
	7			6		1		2
	4				1			9
		9				6		
2			8				7	
1		6		8			3	
5					9	4		6
	3	4	5				1	7

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	7	1	5	8	6	2	3
6	3	5	9	7	2	8	4	1
1	8	2	4	6	3	9	5	7
3	5	9	2	8	4	7	1	6
2	1	8	7	9	6	5	3	4
4	7	6	5	3	1	2	9	8
5	2	1	6	4	7	3	8	9
8	6	4	3	2	9	1	7	5
7	9	3	8	1	5	4	6	2

VISUAL ARTS

Photo exhibit on RP-US ties at UST Museum

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) will host "Partnership at 60: 1946-2006," a traveling photo exhibit commemorating 60 years of Philippine-American friendship, on May 3–17 at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, UST Main Bldg., España, Manila. The photo caravan is held in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of the United States in Manila. The opening ceremony will be on May 3 at 2:30 p.m. US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo will be the guests of honor. For more details, call (02) 406-1611 loc. 8315.

Bamboo exhibit at Met

"Lawiswis: Siga Kawisnag" (Sway: Bend Like a Bamboo)" will open on May 4, 6:30 p.m., in the Lee Gallerina of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. Presented as part of the Filipino Heritage Festival, the exhibit features artworks and contemporary fashion furniture that explore the value of bamboo in Filipino life. The word lawiswis refers to the soft, blowing sound of the bamboo when the wind blows each. Exhibit runs until July 6. The Met Museum is at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas complex on Roxas Blvd., Manila.

Call 527-1111.

"BAMBOO Ship," by Jose Blanco

Jason Moss at West

A collection of new drawings by Jason Moss features portraits on everyday people. The collection is on view in Room Gallery 2 at UMI Regis until yesterday's 5 pm. 634 1291.

DRAWING by Moss

De la Cruz at Magnet

Gerbert de la Cruz's "Accidental Abstraction" stems through the petty pastiche, ironically, encountered in everyday urban mishaps between automobiles and street fixtures. The abstract-expressionist works directly appropriate those of Gerard Richter's. De la Cruz uses marquetry and inlays a layer of breakage mandatory paint chips — one that he takes from the dents and scratches encountered on collisions. The show is on view until May 11 in Magnet Gallery Paseo (Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Dela Rosa St., Makati). Call 811-1886.

"SOMETHED further" I

Villanueva at Boston

Cris Villanueva Jr. will open "Sorry, We're Closed" in Boston Gallery on May 7. Villanueva's work is noted for the playfulness in concluding the look and texture of cartoon bubble-wrapped packaging, which engages the viewer to reassemble the perception of the packaging as a picture and an object. In the show, the artist takes the inquiry to the nature of the exhibit itself. Curated by Ollie Verde, the show exposes the many unit members in the show before its touchdown. Boston is at 43 Boston St., Cubao. Call (02)9999.

"SORRY, We're Closed," by Cris Villanueva

'Poor Ensemble' at Pinto

On view until May 12 is Pinto Art Gallery in Salcedon City is the group exhibit "Poor Ensemble," featuring the paintings, sculptures and installations of Dan Nitor, Pandy Aviado, Poy Vienvenido, Nestor Vinoya and Jaeyoon. The show surveys the artistic directions of the five artists who are contemporaries and have been active on the art scene since the 70/90s. Call 892 9216.

"19 Door 8," by Pandy Aviado

Female form at Ricco-Reese

The group exhibit "Making Method" is staged at the Ricco-Reese Galleries. (Ortigas Paseo, 710 N. Garcia St., Kennedy Project). Bet. Av. 4, Makati until May 19. Artists included in the Fourth Update: Paul Dolero and Ricci Dolero explore the female form on canvas and sculpture. Call 8982643.

"THE THEORY of Seeing or Shining Lights and Shadows in the Afternoon," by Ray Vasconcelo

Simultaneous solo shows at Magnetl

Artists Annadelle Knox, Julian Alcaz, Rod Antonio, Jerry Carlos, Tommy Hobbs, Rodolfo Jorge Zguiden Pagkatipunan and Francisco Pelicor Virtudl hold simultaneous solo shows at the 2M Art Center (LN 2M Magnetl). The shows are collectively called "Solitude Attitude" and are organized by the Art Center Crucible Art Gallery, Renaissance Art Gallery, Art Asia, Heritage Art Corridor, Gallery Nine, Ilig & Amiel Art Co., and Gallery Genesis. The exhibits open on May 5, 6:30 p.m.

Lecture on art law, copyright

Atty. Mingo Aquino is holding a lecture/discussion series on Philippine art law in all Saturdays of May. The forum seeks to discuss relevant provisions of copyright and contract law. Moderator is J. Sedfrey S. Santiago, assistant professor of the John Sollenberger School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University.

The lectures here last slots are limited to 15 persons. The session runs for 3½ hour each. Morning session is at 11 a.m., while afternoon session is at 4:30 p.m. Studio Mingo Aquino is via the UP at Katip's Exit—Gate, 19-E Esmeralda Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call 4263972 (Clarissa) or e-mail klarissaquino@yahoo.com.

BY Barrioquino

Group show at Blanc

"1st Disappointment," a group show featuring Jestine Barrioquino, Lawrence Bravo, Ivan Rivera and Li Sinadjan, will open on May 11, 6 p.m. in Blanc. The show will run until May 31. Blanc is at 3F Crown Tower, 107 K.V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Call 757-0837, 0908-421-9338, or e-mail mail@blancph.com.

BY Barrioquino

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The defiant art of Henri Cainglet

By Constantino C. Tejero

AMONG HIS CONTEMPORARIES, Henri Cainglet would seem like a survivor.

This impression comes not only from the fact that he has been moving around and living in various places in search of inspiration and materials for his art, but also because for years now he has been persisting in his esoteric art-making.

A native of Bohol, Cainglet had lived in Singapore and the United States, studying sculpture at the Art Students League of New York. On returning to the country, he settled for a time in Davao province, and now resides in Tagaytay.

From time to time he would disappear from the country's art scene for a long time, and one time-out-from-here is holding a solo exhibit in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Vienna, Berlin, Nice-Delhi, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur or Hanoi.

After a long absence, the artist has returned with his recent works, "Relikwi," pieces in mixed media, until May 2 in the Art Center at the Artwork, L+L Bldg. A. SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

This is the 2005 in Cainglet's "Art in a Box" series, finely composing boards adorned and stylized cutouts containing assorted objects and inscriptions. Part of the proceeds will go to the priestly community projects of the Holed Sacramentine of Mowo-Manila, inc.

The artist says the series examines his dilemma of being a traveler wherever his calling brings him.

"The contents of each box juxtapose a person's characters: lifestyle, gender and belief," he explains. "The box itself is a work of art...

CLOCKWISE from left: "Intagtag," "Hybrid Relief" and "And God Smiled at Me"

both attendants are to think about a variety of philosophical, cultural, spiritual and environmental issues."

Deliberate crudity

Here are the usual Cainglet oddities in his signature medium of mackintosho and found objects daubed with acrylic in vivid hues. These are industrial detritus made as found: lumber yards, steel and aluminum from junk shops, threads and swatches from textile vendors, toys and figurines from manufacturers—the stuff of Arts Povera.

Though one has seen this before, one can't help but still be impressed by how rough and crude Cainglet is in blending the disparate elements, in utter defiance of the conventional idea of art as one of polish and finesse. The application of paint and even the graffiti inside these boxes are carelessly roughshod.

Typical are "Intagtag," "Lively Breath I Take," "And God Smiled at Me."

Open-faced mixed-media cubicles painted yellow, gold, red, umber, orange, green, dark-ended, labeled with appendages, carvings, cardboard horns, and find more surprises inside: miniatures of human heads, angel, roman basket, Negro Mary's icon, inscriptions such as shrieked the-yellow-train, I don't know you but at least..., the Idiotic, Reason.

The most eloquent is not really a box but a sort of cash or screen on wheels. "Wiki-ti Belief" consists of a steel framework-by solution with aluminum foil, dioxins, bark, with the covered figure a universe with golden wings and bare and undeveloped body.

Passionate discourse

This exhibit, Cainglet says, seeks to define the relationships between art, the artist and the public.

"It proclaims the need for belief in art," he elucidates. "It delivers a passionate discourse about the importance of art and the need to free it from boundaries."

It was while living in Quezon, between Sierra Madre and Bicol Ocean, that the artist further developed his signature mode of art-making, chiefly using for materials the seashells he found on the shore and the illegally logged timber occasionally flooded down the mountains. Add to these the assorted rags, tin cans and industrial discards he collects from manufacturing firms and dumpsites.

One of the exhibit's 80 twenty paintings, sculptures, furniture and installations of considerable dimensions. This makes him not only a vanguard artist but also an assiduous environmentalist.

Cainglet is, of course, not the only artist utilizing found objects for art-making. But while others polish the objects to a sheen and create artworks of remarkable finesse, he appears to be retaining the rawness, grittiness and roughness. Thus his artworks come out as more primitive-looking, and are by claimed to be among the few that can truly be called Arte Povera.

More illustrative of his art-use his exhibit before this one, "SF Butterflies and Silverfish," pieces in acrylic on shaped board and/or stuffed fabrics, also in the Art Center at SM Megamall.

Noncommercial art

The "silverfish" of the exhibit's title were what he described as "paintings on shaped boards." Actually, these were composed of scraps of wood each wrapped with canvas, assembly-stacked to form a sort of wall fragment, then daubed and dripped with acrylic in vibrant monochromes.

As with most of his artworks, the pieces were notable for their texture. Its paintings, they looked similar to his conventional abstractions, only for their wavy or an unconventional format. In fact, they looked more like painted sculptures.

Cainglet pioneered soft sculpture in the country in the early 1990s, popularizing it by producing pieces on a grand scale. In this exhibit, they took the form of butterflies—and what butterflies! Huge-veined-looking figures, of dark-colored fabric swatches sewn together and stuffed with kapok then harnessed to the ceiling, hovering just a little above the dumbfounded gallery goer's head.

They looked more like menacing giant bats than innocuous garden-flutters, or indeed, a swarm of mosquitoes ready to swoop and pounce on the unsuspecting gallery-goer. If you want a stuffed toy, you wouldn't choose this one.

In an age of commercialistic and commercialization, it is truly defiant of Cainglet to be consistently producing noncommercial art for years now. In that connection society, he has also produced no dark shadows.

That is Arte Povera's definite of immediate artworks, he is certainly one of the most courageous artists around.

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LIFESTYLE

Rousing comeback of Helen Quach, titan of the baton

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE POPULAR EXPRESSION "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" is exemplified in the rousing comeback of conductor Helen Quach, who, after an absence of 12 years, has again conquered Manila with a sterling performance, conducting the Manila Symphony Orchestra with pianist Cristina Coyiuto as featured soloist.

Indeed, Manila's music lovers' love for the Lady Tiktot of the Podium is beyond doubt, as they came in droves to attend the recent concert held at St. Scholastica's College's St. Cecilia's Hall, sanctified for the benefit of the Manila Symphony Orchestra Instrument Fund, the first of two concerts scheduled this week with Quach conducting.

Quach had saved Manila audiences before. Today she continues to save...her magic wand simply never ceases to enthrall. As ever, she is dynamite on the podium. She sets a striking presence and energetically wields the baton with ironic might but does it in a very natural manner. Always, her performance is glory bound!

With incumbent resident conductor Ireneo T. Molina acting as concert master, the young musicians of the orchestra played with oozing confidence, lavishly inspired by Quach's solid authority. She readily conveyed her deep understanding of both classical as well as romantic symphonic works into score.

Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3 in C Major, Op. 72(b), one of the very first pieces the original MSO played in 1924 under Alexander Uppigi was played with classic dispatch.

You listened with disbelief. The sound was as homogenous and translucent, conveying utmost drama, highlighted by the dolorous morning off stage by the youthful trumpet player Manuel Entrenido.

The delightful savoring of fine symphonic music continued in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64, which soared with intense brilliance.

The symphonic listening was at its height at this point. The orchestra splashed arresting colors while it vividly pursued the symphonic idea from one solo or group of instruments to the other, intensely delivered by powerful chords and soaring melodies.

It was marvelous to watch youngsters secure fine music with ordinary symphonic venues. These young musicians actually revealed their collective capability of meeting the challenge posed by a world-class conductor. They once more proved the veracity of the truism that there are no bad musicians, only inadequate conductors.

Halves went down the spine, so to speak, as the orchestra located the contemplative second movement. The French horn that played the theme could certainly stand improvement, but the imminence that pervaded

ROSARIO EI

WITH pianist Cristina Coyiuto, who played a Grieg concerto

Rousing comeback...

Pasuyuan B1

the pleasing of the entire movement was acutely divine.

The audience could not contain its admiration so that it burst into applause, prompting Quach to give the signal the orchestra was proceeding to the gracefully scored waltz of the third movement.

In the finale, symphonic grandeur was evoked and expressed in ethnic chords that defined a triumphant march. In the end, the audience gave the performance a thunderous applause and a standing ovation amid shouts of bravo.

Equally absorbing

Contrasts was equally absorbing. She played Grieg's lovely Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16, with élan.

Her clear and elegant tones relaxed to give in to sonorous, but intelligence did not subside to sentimentality. The work, after all, is simply structured and does not call for lavish outlandish pyrotechnics.

Contrasts thus avoided over-indulgence. Rather, she conveyed the inherent humanistic colors and haunting melancholiness of the pieces with clear dispatch, thus resulting in pleasurable listening.

Obviously everyone on stage enjoyed playing. From the conductor with vibrant Gestures kept tight rappers, to the orchestra which played with gusto, showing no inhibition at all.

Conductor and pianist found eloquent collaboration to bring out the idyllic atmosphere that pervades the popular work of Grieg. The first and last movements were grandly played, set admirably soaring the hymn-like themes to the former and evoking the majesty of dance-like rhythm of the latter.

Sublimity reserved in the slow second movement, the adagio. Here Quach led the orchestra in giving a serenely heart-tugging introduction, setting the right mood for Grayson's soulful playing, dishing out singing melodic lines.

The first and last movements were grandly stated. This exuberant rendition is a fitting tribute to Grieg's death centenary.

The MSO's legacy of fine symphonic music truly lives on, said Carlos Manning, president of the Manila Symphony Society. Manning, who has tirelessly raised funds for the orchestra for so many years now, graciously expressed thanks to the audience and the orchestra members.

MSO should regularly engage Quach in guest conductorships as it has done in the past. There is no doubting the fact that her engagement shall place the MSO on the forefront again.

DYNAMIC...striking and energetic, Quach with her magic wand deeply serves steps to applaud.

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RIZALINDO Maxilad

Top Italian pianist-composer in Las Piñas concert

THE CONCERT "MUSICIE PER Soprano" will feature renowned Italian pianist and composer Rolando Maximo on May 5, 6 p.m., at the courtyard of St. Joseph's Church in Las Piñas, home of the famous bamboo organ.

In "Musicie per Soprano," or "Music to Dream," Maximo will play romantic themes from all-time favorite musical pieces.

Maximo is one of Italy's most respected musicians. He has performed in all the famous opera houses and concert halls in Europe. He has collaborated on the piano under the baton of the most important orchestra conductors: Thomas Shippers, Zubin Mehta, Francesco Molinari Pradelli, Georges Prêtre, Peter Maag, Franco Mannino, Daniel Oren, Sir John Barbirolli, Nino Sanzogno, Nino Rota, Carlo Maria Giulini, Oliviero de Fabritiis, Tullio Serafin, Franco Caracciolo, Fernando Previtali, Aldo Ceccato, Vittorio Gui, Ettore Panizza, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Bruno Bartoletti, Lovro von Matacic, Francesco Siciliani, Armando La Rosa Parodi, Bruno Rigacci, Alfredo Verchi, Alfredo Simonetto, Franco Ferrara, Orazio Zilio, Wanda Wiszniewska, Mario Rossi.

Maximo has received numerous awards that acknowledge his talent: Omaggio a Cilea in Reggio Calabria, the Bellini d'Oro in Catania, Luigi Illica in Castel Arquato, Verdi d'Oro in Busseto, Targa d'Oro Premio Omaggio a Vallis Bovalis, Targa d'Oro Omaggio a Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco, Targa d'Oro Premio Omaggio a Bernardino Gigli, Targa d'Oro Omaggio a Vito Gobbi, Targa d'Oro Omaggio a Nicola Rossi Lemeni, Targa d'Oro Omaggio a Beniamino Tagliavini, International Music Award with Monaco (on his 250th anniversary) and Una Vita per la Musica at San Remo Circus.

All these awards were given for the first time to a pianist-composer.

Last year, he visited the Philippines and performed in Manila Cathedral on the 20th anniversary of the canonization to basilica by Pope John Paul II and in commemoration the Pontiff's first death anniversary as well as to celebrate the appointment of Archbishop Ledesmino Bontiso as cardinal.

The recent was the genesis of Capital's move because it was the first time a piano concert of sacred music by Lara was performed in the basilica.

The event is by invitation only.

Why do Russian artists excel and inspire?

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

WHEN PIANIST-CONDUCTOR RUSSIAN PIANIST Sergey Kuznetsov performs May 7 at Philamlife Theatre, he must not answer a question bugging music lovers: Why do Russian artists excel in their fields, inspire others, and command a big following around the world?

When Russian violinist Misha Elman visited Manila in the 1930s, he discovered a violin prodigy in the person of Jovanie Wilkis, who was so inspired by the Russian that he went to the US for studies and became a sensation there. Wheelchair-bound Jovanie can greet a violinist whose fingers are one and even go out of their way to support them.

At 72, National Artist for Dance Lucrecia Urtula Kasilag could sit here with ballet when she saw a Russian dancer named Olga Preobrajenska perform in Bacolod. Many years later, when her Filipiniana-textured world awakens, Kasilag's own Bobbit prima ballerina Joann Hutchinson, who joined the Filipino folk dancers.

In the early '90s, Russia's legend of dance, Maya Plisetskaya, conquered Manila with her legendary Dying Swan, which she executed at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, two nights in a row.

My coverage of that Russian engagement was titled "Russia's Storied Swan Not Fatty" because she had to remove the same piece due to unwelcome audience demand.

Among the Filipino dancers she inspired was probably Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, who also did the Dying Swan with some success.

Last year, the engagement of Russian pianist Dmitri Alexeev and Ilya Rashkovsky were announced with unprecedented acclaim at the CCP and Philamlife Theatre. Rashkovsky had no time to go to his dressing room after the performance at Philamlife because he was met by screaming fans right at the fringe of the stage after his evening of Mozart, Chopin and Scriabin.

Perhaps it is the right mix of discipline and their inborn musical talent that set Russian artists apart.

Rosalynde Smith in his book "The Russians" describes the humane face of the Russian people: "In the public face, ... unpretentious shows itself in the Russian love of the folk melodiously Tchaikovsky and in the fairy-tale world of romantic ballets like 'Swan Lake' and 'Sleeping Beauty.' They fell in love with the Chinese as the handsome young American who played their Tchaikovsky with brutal. When La Scala Opera and Chorus toured Russia, the Russians were literally overcome by the power and emotion of Giuseppe Verdi's "Requiem" and showered the chorus with applause, leaves and flowers. The response to La Scala was no accident, for Russians are like Italians in their love for strong emotions and unrestrained fervency."

Baritone Russian once noted: "When it comes to music and musicians, Russians are very independent-minded and wildly vocal about it. They know their music as Italian can derive from their operas."

When Russian legendary pianist Vladimir Horowitz announced his engagement at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, people queued up for tickets days and nights. One night, in the middle of winter on the eve of the concert, Horowitz saw the Metropolitan manager in the line and saw how people braved the winter cold to buy tickets to his performance.

One of my Horowitz took it upon himself to treat hundreds of ticket buyers to coffee and donuts. The ticket buyers recognized the pianist and created applauding and screaming.

Horowitz recalled that incident: "By the way, it was election night and I was taking a taxi to come back and the taxi driver asked me: 'Sir, by the way, will you tell me for what office you are running? Because the people were screaming all around you.' I told the driver, 'I am not running. I am just a poor pianist.'"

The generosity of the Russian artists was reflected in the Russian violinist Vladimir Spivakov when he performed in Dagupan City in the late '70s. After the series of concerts, the violinist had the gift for everybody, but the wizard boy who attended to his ticket reservations as well as ferrying him around the Filipino conductor in the spirit of his.

By this artist who was to conduct stood all the time during the long trip to Baguio. On the three hundred ten kilometers of Kennon's Sonatina No. 2, Paganini's "Cantabile" ("The Witches' Dance"), and Rubina Hungarian Rhapsody, and the following autographs:

"To Abbi, With great sympathy. Cheerfulness."

By coincidence, Spivakov and Rostropovich shared the same surname, which is also the need for expressing personal and individual qualities in interpreting music.

Tomorrow, who will play Beethoven, Arnaiza and Chopin in Manila, may be still not too his artistic individuality just to please competition judges.

Spivakov once noted: "Competitions are good because they are the only way by which young talents can be noticed. Like some music schools, competitions sometimes murder individuality. The art of playing a beautiful because of the individual touches."

The Russian violinist thinks Heifetz or Kreutzer owners Nathananiell and Emil Gilels.

On striving to have a good performance, the two other have common opinions.

Spivakov: "I work hard on my technique by constant practice and trying to maintain a good memories. On the other hand, I also use my imagination and I learn to concentrate before hand."

Kuznetsov: "First, you must know the psychological meaning of the pieces you are playing. When I am done with that, I work on my technique so that I don't have to 'fight' with the piano. You must also know the composer's intentions, and the more you know this, the better is your performance."

In other Russian names for Manila debut are at Philamlife Theatre in connection with the 60th anniversary of the Philippine American Life Insurance Company. Filipino audiences would realize why foreign critics refer to him as one of the best representatives of the Russian school.

For tickets, call 8987820, 4972877 or 8988130/8129.

Spivakov plants Sergey Kuznetsov, whom international critics call one of the best representatives of the Russian school

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LIFESTYLE

Golden heritage

By Dwaer B. Macilo
Contributor

Camarines Norte seeks to build on its natural and cultural heritage endowments

CAMARINES NORTE HAS billed itself as the "Land of Gold and Golden Opportunities," perhaps evoking as its reputation for having gold resources.

But the gold could be elsewhere. It could be, for example, in the natural and cultural riches of the province.

The province's potential is seen on Calaguas Island, which has a beach that's boasted as better than Boracay's.

Mayor Joaquin Palencia, who hails from Camarines Sur to, pointed to the four-white sand of Calaguas. It is a pure virgin island worth the two-hour boat ride from the capital city of Daet.

Calaguas may look surreal in first glimpse. The main beach is called "Mahabang Buhangin," referring to the island's extremely long beach length.

The crystal-clear water stretches offshore and the waves are perfect for surfing. There are no resorts to be found but there are a few friendly locals willing to help guests set up camp.

A day is obviously not enough to enjoy Calaguas, but it was the only attraction affected by Camarines Norte.

Tinahon can visit Paracale Catholic Church, said to be one of the oldest in the country. It contains a replica of the Black Nazarene, which is honored during the Cagsalungan Festival.

For those who don't like the idea of going on a two-hour boat ride in Calaguas, there is the Bagasbas beach, about five kilometers from downtown Daet. The white-sand beach passed the international surfing standard of the Department of Tourism. It is an inexpensive alternative for swimming and picnic.

Camarines Norte also produces some of the sweetest queen pineapples in the country. This must have been the inspiration behind the Pineapple Island resort, a one-of-a-kind tourist park in Daet noted to family getaways.

During a courtesy call of the media, Gov. Jesse Typoco and Rep. Renato Unico Jr. expressed their optimism about the potential of Camarines Norte to become a top tourist destination in the country.

Considered as the gateway to the Bicol region, the province has a lot to offer especially to those who are looking for something new and are seeking adventure, tired of the overcrowded summer beach destinations.

ALTITUDE: Quency Hernando of Tower Sports mag

A STRETCH of Calaguas beach is called "Mahabang Buhangin" by locals

ARTIST Joy Palero is guides a media tour of Camarines Norte.

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Text and photos by Marlet B. Salazar

FOR ALL ITS PRISTINE BEAUTY AND ABUNDANT natural resources, the town of Palanan remains a faraway waiting to be unraveled.

Palanan's claim to fame in history is being the place where the first president of the Philippine Republic, Emilio Aguinaldo, made his last stand in 1901. The town service neighborhood there also became the subject of research among environmentalists and conservationists.

The town consists of seven coastal barangays (Culaat, Dicabasan, Dicadlasan, Dicamay, Malipayo, Marikit, and San Leiden) where the waters of the Pacific Ocean flow. The 39 other barangays form the non-coastal area (Matalatala, Bituag, Cemento, San, Centro Norte, Dalian, Dimaluhos Ave, Emmanuel, Dimaluhos, Sta. Barbara, and Villa Robles).

Palanan's inaccessibility is both a hurdle and an invitation to adventurers (others). Until recently there were no small airliners that ply between the town to Palanan. Today only a six-seater plane from Cauayan City makes, takes passengers there.

A much longer trip by land and sea takes about 9 hrs from Manila. A bus ride from Santiago, Isabela, to Brgy. Dibanag, Maconacon, takes eight hours. From there a banca ride to Palanan takes eight hours. Other options are to hire from Dingalan or Baler, Aurora, which takes six to seven hours, or a three- to four-day hike from San Mariano.

So lack of an accessible road is one of the few reasons Palanan has been virtually isolated. Electricity is limited to 12 hours, 6 - 9pm to 12 noon and is suspended at 12 midnight.

A predominantly Catholic community, the parish of St. Mary Magdalene is situated just adjacent to where the landmark of Aguinaldo's Last Stand is located where Palanan River runs.

The parish doesn't have a resident priest. According to a local, lay ministers hold Mass once on Sundays. Priests only go there maker we hear there are no Catholic holidays.

Filipinos' obsession with water sanctuaries is satisfied at the Diconsolan Beach Resort in Brgy. San Isidro. A resort by a sea, whichever is available, ready to Brgy. Dimaluhos Brgy. Centro Norte. Ideally the area is the middle of nowhere in the Isabela National of Fisheries. It takes taken tricycles or smaller transport to cross a small river to reach Brgy. Culaat.

The river cruise of Palanan River to San Isidro just in time for the sun to set traces a spell of awe and admiration. It takes only about 20 minutes to reach the Diconsolan Beach Resort. No reason was given why the barangay was named San Isidro from its original name of Diconsolan which means "to sink." The sand on the beach is soft which creates one's feet "vanish" leaving a deep dent of bare trail.

A pair of bar stalls with 112 households (as of 2000) is divided into marine sanctuary. It yields different types of marine species. The crystal-clear water makes it possible to see the corals from the marine bed especially in the morning. Plenty of lobsters which sell for around a few hundred pesos a kilo are found at one portion of the sea.

Fresh fish broths on early morning hour this as the marine quality of Dinapigue allows fishermen to marvel at the marine in the Pacific Ocean. The coast going to Dinapigue there is week-invading such fish species.

Dinapigue is where some Dumagat tribes (our Bumagats are nomads) but has maintained to live in harmony with the other locals of Palanan. A census in urban they call Honeymoon Island which was so named for some reason, according to the locals is so beautiful as what honeymoon and all-of-it.

The Ibulad Falls can be reached after a run-hour trek (depending on the pace) from the shore of fishing to reach Brgy Intalgum where it is divided. Children have to cross at least three creeks and no endless expanse of cornfield and farms. This can also be reached from another town of a three-day mountain trek from the fishing.

The locals are evidently proud of their place. They too marvel at these works of mother nature.

ST. Paul Underg-round River

Text by Joel V. Nigos
Photos by Abbas Jachao Cole

LONG BEFORE TOURISTS GAVE BIGGIE serving their sights on Palawan, adventurers travelers known as backpackers have discovered and explored the island's wonders of this archipelago of 1,700 islands and islets.

Dubbed as the Philippines' last ecological frontier, Palawan harbors vast tracts of virgin rainforests ranging the length of the mainland. Fringing reefs and coral atolls spare a new realm to discover under the silver waters and among the archipelagos.

At Puerto Princesa City, the province's capital is the St. Paul Underground River. Declared as a Unesco World Heritage Site, this 8.2 kilometer river is touted as for the longest underground river in the world.

Unbelievably enticed as the "Vantage trip," the tour to the Underground River with its breathtaking sight is surely a must for every traveler-local or foreign alike. At the end of the tour, seeing the stopped for museum of naturalness and management makes your wonder to amazement.

Watch the rare-decorated along the horizon while cruising around Puerto Princesa Bay through the winding Iwahig River. When night falls, quietly watch the fireflies give on a magic show of their own, lighting up trees with tiny dancing. Bickering lights amid the vast mangrove forest. But your flashlights into the water, where small fishes jump and dotters as well.

Early-rooter morning, while many revelers in Princesa Bay and wait and watch quietly the green creatures of the sea, the bottlenose dolphins as they playfully execute their spectacular moves before plunging into cold depths.

At Honda Bay (or, to locals and others mainland alike, to shops or what are found in the islands. Snorkel or bathe in the white sand beaches of Pandan Island, so called because of the wild pandan plants which are abundant in the area. Snorkel-lshed beauty of our Kilometer sunsets of smallest islands dot. Iona in shape.

Underground river trains beach f dolphin-watching in the morning, o watching at night. These are the ex perience you would only have in Pa

RSL or The Legend Palawan flig *is the in-house tour service of Sta Hotel Palawan.* For reservations, several reservations office at 709- ltd.

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Now Laking National members can join in the summer fun with Enchanted Kingdom and National Boo
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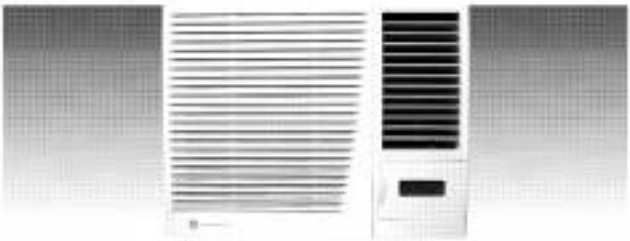

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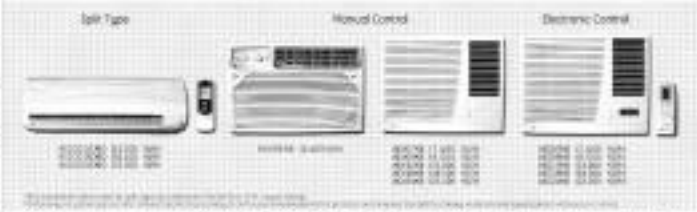
This summer, nothing cools you better than GE. The hottest air conditioners at the lowest. With a high energy efficiency rating (EER) and a wide range of cooling capacity guaranteed to suit your area requirement, GE air conditioners are among the most cost-effective in the market today. What's more, you're backing on GE – a brand known around world for its quality and durability – to give you years of dependable service at a competitive price. And should you need to have your unit serviced, you can rely on reliable nationwide service centers to assist you.

Get superior cooling with superior savings. Get the hottest air conditioners to cool you down this summer, today.

GE imagination at work



kstore's 4+1 Promo! Buy 4 tickets and get one absolutely FREE. t discount. It's another magical treat you wouldn't want to miss

Summer sojourn at home

SCHOOL IS OUT FOR THE NEXT TWO months and most parents are already sweating their brains for possible activities for their kids to keep them busy and productive as well.

There's the traditional out-of-town trips, DIY installation at home, exciting board games, hunting number workbooks, or probably even original ways games like patintero, tagutan, or tumbang preso for some "physical" bonding.

But why not try the Internet? It offers today's young citizens a more comprehensive and quick view of anything and everything, and if you think your kids, teenagers or new graduates have the whole Internet universe to absorb information and learn the least after passing the "legitimate" and valuable ones rests not of school, then feed it by equaling them to the latest and use of computers despite their early age.

Today's most revolutionary computer processor, the Intel Core 2 Duo, with Intel 945GT Express chipset and an 12 memory cache, powers the Aspire L310. It guarantees peak performance at less power consumption, perfect match for long hours of use.

With this processor at the heart of Acer's L310, your children will surely enjoy their summer computing experience, whether when playing exciting computer games or learning the rudiments of surfing the Internet right in the comforts of your own home.

And despite the size, this unit has a 160GB SERIAL memory upgradable to 250, 320GB up to 500GB hard drive to ensure that all large office files, photos, and videos are comfortably stored. It also has an integrated 7.1 channel surround sound, high-definition audio card for throbbing bass and crispy tables whether watching movies or playing heart-pounding online or PC games played through a Super Multi optical drive.

Another plus is the Aspire L310's affordability that suits the homemaker's budget yet does not compromise quality or power. And in the midst of space constraints in most homes, one seriously considers the power inside its compact size – a size that not only fits small spaces but evokes elegance and sophisticated look.

Parents should plan carefully their kids' summer activities at home. They can't be expected to stay put, eat, and stare at the ceiling the whole day for the duration of summer. An invaluable internet experience, and using an Acer L310 computer, should be a rewarding summer activity for the kids, something they could look forward to year after year.

Beating Banaue in a race

UNDER THE UNRELENTING HEAT OF THE noontime sun, the participants of the orienteering challenge stopped by the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) booth for their very first drink of the day. Some sat down to rest, while others headed directly to badges of grass and vegetation while having behind the picturesque scenery of endless rice terraces in Poitan, Banaue in Ifugao.

Sweat, gasps of breath, and aching muscles defined the physical condition of the outdoor athletes, but the determination to finish every kilometer of the 40-kilometer-long orienteering challenge is a top priority among the 24 teams who joined the race on April 13.

This is the second time the PTA conducted the orienteering challenge, which is a form of exciting sport involving navigation with a map and compass. Orienteering is a dared race in which participants use a map and compass to race a preset course composed of "checkpoints" or "controls" that are indicated on the map. Most orienteering competitions are on foot, with participants navigating cross-country and attempting to complete the race in the shortest time.

Assessing her grinning, Conquest Ironwill was declared the overall champion in the "Feet of Iron Racers, Banaue Orienteering Challenge." The male and female finishers also won in the mixed category. The two athletes finished the race with a total time of seven hours and twenty-two seconds. In the open category, ARVPark was declared the winner with a total of nine hours and thirty-three minutes.

The other top racers who finished the race in the overall category were Tuk, Sandpaper Gray (SW7)ink, and DW7Shadow. In the open category, the other top finishers were UPM Shoebox, Sandpaper, Yacon Flex, and Tinkers Inn Bikman. In the mixed category, the other top finishers were Tuk, Sandpaper Gray, Synchilla and UPMC.

The participants, who were composed of students, outdoor athletes, and outdoor hobbyists competed through approximately 20 kilometers and a total of 1,000 feet of mountainous terrain, which started from the main friend. -Raquel O. Gonzaga

24 outdoor teams scaled the rice terraces, ran through rivers and rough terrain to finish the 40-km. orienteering challenge

TERRACES conquerors orienteering challenge winners pose with Miss Earth Czarah Rita Raquel Santos, ambassador for goodwill and tourism of Canada.

Show off your sexy side this summer

SOCIETY OF SEX: 2008 Soho chic. The new sexy age (pronounced sass-am-ass) debute collection by Shamal Inc. puts empress your individual assertive style with its varied range of unique themes.

sassy age is a French word that means for charming. We feel believe that a bridal world of cyberfulness, drama and imagination exists in every woman, and aims to bring for individual charm and playful sense to life with the sassy age collection, a sister brand of Shamal. "We created this collection as a distinctive, but bound to attract today's young girl young at heart," says Tadalina Tuna, president and CEO of Philippine Shamal Corp. "It is for the young, urban woman who is in touch with her sensuality and loves defining her personal style."

Inspired by fashion from the 1800s to today each dress has you embrace your feminine charms while loving your sassy side alone. The fall/Spring/Summer 2007 collection features a total of 15 different themes, namely Dainty Diane, Brandy Black, Stiffed Check, Nail Scratch, Playful Pinkie, Posh Pistols, Silver Bells, Runaway Babes Face, Sapphire Bluesy, Sassy Fabric, Sensual Aurelia, Simply Velvet, Sweet Shabby and Stylish Sharp.

Depending on the theme, the retail price for a sassy age lingerie will come from P695 and a matching bottom from P595. The sassy age collection is available at Shamal counters in leading department stores.

Look out for the new theme launching very soon in April 2007!

For more information on the sassy age collection, visit http://www.sassy-age.com.

Re-hydrate this summer with pure drinking water from Merlin

WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN A REFRESHING DRINK TO COOL OFF this summer's heat? But new scientific studies advocate water isn't even the richest of 02, a world leader in home appliances come to revolutionize breakthrough in filtration technology. The 02 Merlin world of pure drinking water system. It makes use of reverse osmosis technology that removes impurities in up to 3.6 gallons (13.6 liters)* of water per day, instead of only 10 to 15 gallons, a vast experience that lets you drink from a stronger taste*** Plus, it lets you enjoy a steady stream of high capacity performance and creates new opportunities for customized use of this piece of a home section. So quench your thirst like 02 has never known with clean pure water from Merlin.

(50 lpd (3.44 bar), 7.5 degrees F (25 degrees C), 750 ppm NaCl. ** At a pressure less than of 1 (86.9 psi) for a five corporate term, visited CTN Industries, Inc. (0545-3908 local 420/421) or (0917-8143828. Also available at leading appliance and home improvement stores and at the following 02 showrooms: Shangri-la (631-8288), Greenbelt (656-7545), and MG Home Depot For Bonifacio (815-8870). Visit the website www.o2philippines.com for more information. Free installation and lifetime free service in Metro Manila only.

Bawat patak, nagdadagdag lakas.

Nakikiisa kami sa pagpapatupad ng pangangalaga. Sa pamamagitan ng aming Nutritional Feeding Program at ng Kweh-Kwis! It's Fun to be Fit Program, nakatuggan ng dagdag na kaalaman at kakayahan sa kalusugan ang mga nang-aaral ng mga pamahalang katulong sa mga programang ito.

The Coca-Cola company
kaunti pansin, malaking epekto

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Ernesto G. Velarde

READY, SET: Swear on your sweetheart that she will be fair and square. TV personalities Nancy Castiglione and Jeff Rodriguez shake hands to mark the beginning of the Celebrity Volleyball Championship matches on Boracay Island recently.

Ivatan kids take lead in Cinemalaya entry

By Marinell R. Cruz

OVER 150 IVATAN CHILDREN auditioned for the roles of Peping and Lito, the revered characters in "Kadin," a Cinemalaya Film Festival entry shot entirely in Sabtang, Batanes.

Marie Mark Cardona, 9, and Monica Joy Camacho, 10, landed the roles because of their "natural acting," the film's writer-director, Adolf Alix, Jr., told Inquirer Entertainment.

"When I saw the audition paste of eyes I've ever seen. He stole no one," Alix said. "And Monica reminds us so much of Alix (De Rossi) who's sharp and mannerful."

Heritage site

Ivatans are natives of the Batanes Islands in the northernmost tip of Luzon, following landmark resettlement in the 1960's "model for change" site in the Philippines by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Since plays Peping, whose family sells goat's milk for a living. One day, Gines, the goat, goes missing. It is said that younger sister Lito, are not to find it.

Early tryouts

"The subject touches on the love shared the life—that kindness and cruelty can be found in either parents," said the director.

Auditions began in January, where Alix first visited the island for research. After two days, the 150 hopefuls were trimmed down to two girls and four boys, who later attended a month-long workshop.

Alix and Cardona, who had to walk four hours for hotel, almost did not make it to the auditions.

"We arrived at 9 p.m. when the crew was ready to call it a day," Alix recounted. "But there is problem for the role. He was abandoned by his parents when he was a baby, and grew up with his grandmother. So many the director's an innate sensitivity in his eyes."

"Kadin," or "The Goat," was also realized by its hallmarks, the local dialect. It is a co-production of Hayde Petrasa, Ignee Medio and Cinemalaya.

"Kadin" is one of the 14 full-length features in this year's Cinemalaya Film Festival, to be held from July 20 to 29.

Indie Sine features

Meanwhile, the horror film "Tambarans" will premiere at the Indie Sine Cinema 8 of Solaire with Gilberto Antonio at 7 p.m. The film is produced and directed by former ABS-CBN talent Angelica, who is also its lead star.

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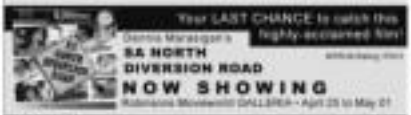
GALLERIA

1 PERFECT STRANGER + THX
2 PAN'S LABYRINTH
3 GRAY MATTERS
4 FIREHOUSE DOG
5 SHOOTER
6 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2
7 THE LAST MINSTY
8 IndieGlow: An Alt/Electronic Music
9 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
10 WILD HOGS



ERMITA

1 PAN'S LABYRINTH
2 RUMBLEBOY
3 GRAY MATTERS
4 FIREHOUSE DOG
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
6 SHOOTER
7 WILD HOGS
PERFECT STRANGER

METRO EAST

1 PAN'S LABYRINTH
2 WILD HOGS
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 GRAY MATTERS
5 RUMBLEBOY
6 FIREHOUSE DOG
7 PERFECT STRANGER
8 SHOOTER

NOVALICHES

1 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
2 WILD HOGS
3 GRAY MATTERS
4 PERFECT STRANGER
5 RUMBLEBOY
6 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

PIONEER

1 FIREHOUSE DOG
2 SHOOTER
3 PAN'S LABYRINTH
4 GRAY MATTERS

STA. ROSA

1 THE REAPING
2 ZOMBIES
3 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
4 MISS POTTER
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

LIPA

1 WILD HOGS
2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 MISS POTTER
4 TMNT
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

DASMARINAS

1 MISS POTTER
2 ASK THE DUST
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 THE REAPING
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

ANGELES

1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 MISS POTTER
4 NORBIT

IMUS

1 THE LAST MINSTY
2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 GRAY MATTERS
4 WILD HOGS
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2
6 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA

STARMILLS

1 WILD HOGS
2 RUMBLEBOY
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 NORBIT
5 TURISTAS
6 ROCKY BALBOA

BACOLOD

1 MISS POTTER
2 TMNT
3 RESERVE
4 PATHFINDER
5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
6 ALPHA DOG

ILOILO

1 PATHFINDER
2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 MISS POTTER
4 ALPHA DOG
5 WILD HOGS
6 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER

Scoot over for Homer

CHEER FACTOR

ORLANDO, FLORIDA.. FEARS that and the rest of the TV lampoon family are headed to the amusement park.

Universal Studios will feature the cartoon characters in a new ride set to open at its two parks in Orlando and Hollywood, California, in the spring of 2008, the parks announced Tuesday.

The new attraction is not yet named and will replace "Back to the Future: The Ride." AP

Yoga film shows what's going on

TIRUVELI...YOGA, THE ANCIENT INDIAN discipline whose critics to join mind, body and soul, is being transformed by Western capitalism into franchises and pricey products, according to a documentary film.

"Yoga, Inc." made its debut this week at the 11th Yoga Forums International documentary film festival, 164 feet, winding up today.

"Where an industry is that big, commercialization is unavoidable, and there will always be people remaining around the edges who are ready to sash in," said Yoga Body-based filmmaker John Philip in an interview with Agence France-Presse. But for a pinches "sound in reminiscence," he added, it's still that it's making some people rich.

$10-B industry

Yoga, the film shows, is an US$80-billion industry with moguls such as Los Angeles superstar yoga teacher Bikram Choudhury and his more than 750 franchised studios worldwide leading the way.

The word itself is said to promote every thing from vodka to diaries to panties.

Philip, who previously trashed the cuisine of former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani in his film "Bodymind," said he was intrigued by the dissonance between the sparse life-ness of competition and the yogic ideals of serenity and enlightenment.

The film explores the clash between karma and capitalism by breaking on a court battle between a group of yoga teachers calling themselves the Open Source Yoga Unity and the Choudhurys' yoga impresario Bikram.

In 2002, Bikram, threatened to sue the yoga teachers for copyright infringement. He trademarked "Hot Yoga" routines from a 26 poses performed in 26 plus C 106 plus Fi heat.

Not surprising

Philip is not surprised by yoga's commercialization. In the 1960s, he said, yoga fit in with counter-culture values, but today people in the West view yoga as a form of fitness.

"Instead of learning yoga for its meditative and spiritual effects, most people want to look great naked and reach their toes," he said.

The film also follows yoga entrepreneurs Bob Weidel and George Liebert, who founded and sold the search engine Ask Jeeves and are now opening studios called Yoga Works.

"We bristle at the word chain; we are a family of yoga schools," insists Weidel. Yet, small independent yoga studios are closing, crushed by competition from franchises and gyms.

Most of these small-studio owners are women, remarked Philip, while the successful entrepreneurs and high-profile teachers like Bikram are men. "It's a male-dominated field, even though women are 75 percent of the people who take yoga classes."

As a senior yoga teacher, Abai Finger says in the film: "The universe is behind this, not us, and yoga will go exactly where it needs to go." AFP

'Babel'

TWO MOROCCAN boys, unintentionally shoot an American tourist.

In an instant, the lives of four groups of strangers—in three continents collide.

The film, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett and directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, is now available on DVD for P575, on VCD for P375.

Travolta, Allen out of comfort zones

IN THE STATES, THE RAMBUNCTious "road" movie, "Wild Hogs," is described as a "sleeper" hit—meaning, an unexpected success at the box office.

After seeing the film, we conclude that it became popular with middle-aged male moviegoers because its main characters represented that demographic, and viewers empathized with its four heads' decision to energize their humdrum lives by hopping on their motorcycles and going on a "liberating" road trip.

Played by Tim Allen, John Travolta, Martin Lawrence and William H. Macy, the biker movie's protagonists get married, have their lives bungalowed for once they hit the road.

Being suburbites, they have a hard time coping with women's onslaught, and other deprivations one in the household. But their major woes are wrought by a '60s-type biker gang, the Del Fuegos, who seem to marry to test-ride Sweetums are duchess.

Intimidating image

The movie's protagonists call their group the Wild Hogs, hoping to acquire up an intimidating image of toughness and roughness. Actually, they're padawans for the runaway Del Fuegos, who are led by Ray Liotta in full tattooed and super-nasty mode.

Imagine his magic, therefore, when Travolta's character throws his boss to the wind and heads into you'll be going at the head-on game. Luckily, the Wild Hogs find momentary refuge in a small town, where Macy's newly character is able to overcome his fear of women, and get himself a hot girlfriend.

For other Wild Hogs are similarly able to exercise their own demons, as the trip, despite all of its mundane cliffs rather, turns out to be truly liberating after all.

But the movie occasionally executes such potholes by serving up typical humor that aren't difficult to avoid, and set up situations like the small movie's Chili festival that gets nowhere fast.

In addition, the bike conflict is stretched to much that it gets tiresome. Other complications could have helped lengthen the movie's less-genuine up.

On the plus side, Travolta provides a welcome surprise by occasionally spoofing himself and getting really goofy in some scenes. Allen also gets out of his comfort zone in a number of sequences, and presents an honest view of the ups and ups of middle age.

"Wild Hogs" has its bumps and humps, but its likable leads' performances are easy and empathetic enough to make the road movie a generally upbeat viewing experience.

Comic relief

Get comic relief from the summer heat on Jack TV this month: Liz Lemon, the head writer of a live TV show, has to keep the program afloat when her old boss dies and a new one comes in. Watch her teammate the judges in "Pie-Table Master" amidst a floury snowstorm and dueling egos. The show also stars Alan Ruldolph, who won a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Watch and see what awesome are talking about their sitcom, "30 Rock," telecast on Jack TV at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Also catch "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Just wowzer! Grunkle Stan (Mac, Dee, Charlie and Dennis!) as they run a bar while overcoming their relentless self-involvement to make their friendship and business work.

Keira Knightley

In "Pirates 3: At World's End," Keira Knightley reprises her gutsy portrayal of Elizabeth Swann. Knightley, Brighton royal's clear when she made "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," she was only 17 years old, and had to be chaperoned on set by her mother. She admits to getting tongue-tied when she shot her first scene with Johnny Depp.

Two years later, "At World's End" is about to be released. Keira has become a poised and very beautiful young woman. The third Pirates movie features not only the regular gang of Depp, Knightley and Orlando Bloom, but also Chow Yun-Fat as a pirate lord and returning favorite Geoffrey Rush as Captain Barbossa.

Ivatan kids take lead in Cinemalaya entry

Story on page G2

Also in Indie film: Bobby Bonifacio's "Homeschooled" will have a week-long run starting May 2. The film stars Isabella Soriano, the first Actress award from the Cinemalaya International Film Festival's Digital Lokal Genius.

"Tabing," written and directed by New York-based filmmaker Rodd Gelbea, will be screened from May 23 to 25, also at Cinema 8. Leading the cast is Ayan Sigmundsen, who plays Angelo, a young boy "in search of a way to exorcise his personal demons."

KIDS Mark Cardona, right, and Monica Joy Carvajal star in "Kadin" (JOEL)

OPENS MAY 9

AMERICA's MOST TALKED-ABOUT MOVIE!

HOW DO YOU CONVICT A MAN WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVEN INNOCENT?

ANTHONY HOPKINS RYAN GOSLING

I SHOT MY WIFE...PROVE IT.

FRACTURE

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AT THE CINEMAS

TFX

G1	1 FIREHOUSE DOG	2 [illegible]	3 SHOOTER	4 [illegible]
G4	1 FIREHOUSE DOG	2 SHOOTER	3 PAN'S LABYRINTH	
	4 PERFECT STRANGER	5 STUMP THE YARD	6 GRAY MATTERS	7 WILD HOGS
GB1	1 SHOOTER		2 WILD HOGS	
GB3	1 PAN'S LABYRINTH		2 GRAY MATTERS	
	3 FIREHOUSE DOG	4 SHOOTER	5 PERFECT STRANGER	
ATC	1 GRAY MATTERS		2 FIREHOUSE DOG	
	3 PAN'S LABYRINTH	4 WILD HOGS	5 SHOOTER	
ACC	1 ROCKY BALBOA	2 MISS POTTER	3 LITTLE CHILDREN	4 SHOOTER
M2	1 [illegible]		2 SHOOTER	
	3 GRAY MATTERS	4 PAN'S LABYRINTH	5 FIREHOUSE DOG	

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA

Toby's Sports Grand
April 27 to 29, 2007

Greenbelt

TOWN

Pangalay Interactive
May 5 to 6, 2007

AYALA CENTER CEBU

Bazaar at Level 1 (near Activity Center)
April 1 to 30, 2007

MARKET! MARKET!

The Wonders Series by Ryan Cayabyab
April 26, 2007

Greenbelt 5 Grand Prize presents A Collection of Myth
feat. Randy Ortiz, Highlight Assassin, Jade Lyon & Joey Samson
April 20 to May 6, 2007

Cinemalaya

Repertory Philippines presents ALLMOVE
at REP's Onstar Theater - April 13 to 29, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0113

Ayala MUSEUM

CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland and Abroad
Opening until May 27, 2007
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

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SHOOTER
PAN'S LABYRINTH
PERFECT STRANGER

MARILYN MONROE

NICOLE KIDMAN

LOS ANGELES—OSCAR-WINNING screen idol Nicole Kidman could be set to star in a remake of the Marilyn Monroe classic "How to Marry a Millionaire."

The Australian actress is to produce the remake through her company Blossom Films and may also star in the film, according to entertainment industry daily The Hollywood Reporter.

The report said the film would be a contemporary reinterpretation of the 1953 classic that helped propel Monroe to stardom. AFP

OPENS TODAY!
Sine NOVELA
Presents
Sinasamba Kita
SHERYL CRUZ WENDELL RAMOS CARDO AQUINO VALERIE CONCEPCION
LUNES - BIYERNES pagkatapos ng Muli sa GMA

Specials of the month

MONUMENTS of alien visits? These replicas of world-famous Moai statues (above) attract visitors to the Birch zoo Dardani (Opera Park in Switzerland).

Some people believe these mysterious statues on Easter Island, Chile are evidence that aliens landed on Earth thousands of years ago.

On National Geographic Channel's "Is it Real: Aliens Intercourse," experts separate aliens from science fiction.

The program airs tomorrow, 10 p.m., with replays on May 2, 2 a.m. and May 6, 6 p.m.

Mother's Day

Mother's Day specials on Hallmark Channel begins on May 9, 10 p.m., with "Augusta, Gone" (below) which chronicles the courageous attempts of a mother to save her daughter's spiral into anorexia and drugs. Showing on May 10, 10 p.m. is "Getting Out," about an ex-convict's battle to gain custody of his son who was while in jail.

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINM

Lucy loosens up

Mrs. Goma, unplugged, uninhibited, unleashed

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

"ASK ME ANYTHING," SHE SAID.

Some did.

But how do we throw tough questions at crazy Dawna Gomez?

It didn't hurt, of course, that she was easy on the eyes—natural, standing, speaking or still.

The charisma that captured the heart of the country's most eligible bachelor last (no long ago, actor Richard Gomez, was in full display the night Lucy dropped by Inquirer Entertainment.

Whether gabbing about 6-year old daughter Juliana or about her "fluorescent skin," she was disarmingly loquacious.

Small wonder. She is now a full-fledged TV host, gabbing over TV shows (ABC 5's "Shall We Dance" and GMA's "The Sweet Life").

Sample: Do you talk this animatedly with Goma?

"More animated pa," she quipped, briefly skipping a beat.

Who's more talkative between the two of you?

"Me! Richard always tells me: 'You're so chatty, honey.' When we're about to sleep na, he will be talking about whatever comes to mind, I'd whisper: 'I hope you don't mind, honey, but I'm really sleepy.'"

Lucy also revealed that Juliana will sleep sandwiched between her parents.

"Actually, it has to be me in the middle because Richard and Juliana prefer to sleep without leg out of the blanket, while I need to be completely covered. It's because when I was a kid my mom used to say that a ghost caressed her feet while in bed!"

For those interested in the Gomezes' bedroom quirks: ...

How is Goma as a husband, lover?

He is romantic, but in an unconventional way. He's the type who'll give flowers for no reason at all.

Once, he gave me flowers that I know didn't come from a flower shop. It looked as if he just plucked them from a garden. Wild flowers, yellow stems. At that point I'm one overjoyed, though, he would've given me cobalts! It and I would've been so happy!

Richard is very sweet when he really gets around to it. We wrote me long letters. He's the one who started calling me Honey.

Coming from a non-showbiz clan, did your family have reservations about you marrying an actor?

Yah. Most my dad then my mom. We call our mom, Mother of Perpetual Help. She's not as strict as my dad.

How did you convince them about Goma?

It's because it seemed innocently enough, with just phone calls. Maybe they thought that since he was in Manila and I was in Cebu, nothing would happen.

But the phone calls became more frequent and one day he just got a visit. That was when he finally got to talk with my dad. When they finally met him, their perception of him changed. Time to become a regular visitor in Cebu.

Is he good in bed?

Hahaha! (No answer)

Once I asked him: How come you had all these girlfriends? And he said, something like "Well, you know, all my experiences ..."

I also think we bring into our marriage all that we've learned or experienced from previous relationships, and I'm not just talking about sexual experiences ha.

Richard goes all out when he loves. I once asked him: Did you love all your girlfriends? He said: Yes.

That's the answer that you want, right?

Yah, because I wouldn't want him to be in long, broken relationships. How would that make me different? That means that he can be in a relationship with me and not really love me.

What did you bring into this relationship?

Maybe it's a different take on life. He's been in show biz for so long, so I'd like to think that I brought normalcy into his life. That I brought him a family I'm very close to my parents, while he grew up with only his paternal grandmother.

Was there any girl you were particularly jealous of?

No. I always say I have no reason to be jealous because they came before me. If I only knew it's a girl would come in during my time.

There was this story that a curtain actress once admitted to you that she had a fling with Goma in the past and that it wasn't serious. How did you react?

Ah yah. That was during our "Richard Gomez Lucy" (ABS-CBN sitcom) days and she was a guest. I didn't even know that they had something. I was caught by surprise. Inis-i-proyekto? I was okay. I feel her sis, so that didn't affect mine.

Are you the jealous type?

I can, if there is reason to be. But I'm no sensibly jealous. In his line of work, I cannot just react to everything. Especially when he has leading women. I have to two shows that.

Is that possible?

Yah, because when I met him, he was already an actor. It has to be in the scales of the professional. If it goes beyond that, I cannot take that sitting down.

JUCO VG

TAKE FIVE

"IT'S EASY! for me to say since I'll never go under the knife. But when the time comes, I'm sure I could no longer deny giving who knows? I just might."

Lucy loosens up

IN THIS photo by Richard Cornes, Lucy paints Easter eggs in their mismatched home.

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As far as I am concerned, even if girls throw themselves at him, for as long as he doesn't kiss, I won't react.

How are you when you get mad?

This Orange Walkard's and my manager Jhonglee Quijano knows because he's one of the few people I call when I'm upset.

Are you confrontational? Are you a screamer?

No. No. I don't scream. Mas malfu, I can cry and cry.

Do you give him the cold shoulder treatment?

Ah yah! The cold shoulder, the silent treatment, the whole nine yards and everything. Luckily, we haven't had so supposedly when I had to pack my bags.

Which is more effective: crying or the cold shoulder?

Both/on. You can only achieve so much with both ... You cannot just give him the cold shoulder. You cannot just make him guess. Men are a different breed. We cannot expect them to read our minds. It's not for us here in college. We really have to be straight to the point.

Do you tell him how beautiful he is?

As is the only man that I personally know whom I can call beautiful because he is male enough to be described in that way and it won't sound effeminate.

Sometimes I greet him: "Good morning, beautiful" or "Where are you going beautiful man?" But I don't call him beautiful every day. I don't feed his ego that way.

Do you have any insecurities?

I've always wanted to be dark-er. I tried everything. I'd put Coca Cola, iodine and lemon on my skin and baked under the sun. In the 1990s, the fad was to be dusky. It's only now that I'm not (in vogue), with all these skin-whitening products.

I remember the first time I was in Manila, I swallowed two guys saying: "Wow, she's so fair! Even in the dark you can see her. She's like luminous." I'm not, it wasn't a compliment.

Since all the men in my family were fair, they preferred tanned and exotic women. As a result, my sisters and cousins and I would sunbathe all day long. But we only ended up with freckles.

I stopped fighting my source because it only gets ugly when I retaliate. Now, I just protect it. Fortunately my husband likes my fluorescent skin!

Is Juliana fair or dark?

That's one thing I prayed hard for that she wouldn't go through what I went through in school. That people won't stare at her just because she's so fair.

What's a combination of you and Gutsy?

Yah. She's considered fair, but after spending time under the sun, her skin turns to a really nice color. The color that I can never have ... so hard, my daughter can have it.

How do you bond with Juliana?

Our idea of playtime with her dad is different from playtime with me. With me, it's laid back activities like arts and crafts, drawing and baking cookies. With her dad, it's really rough. Pillow fights, rumbling, running, rollerblading, cycling.

It's not unusual for Richard and Juliana to go hiking inside the house, in the living room. There are a lot of open spaces in our townhouse home.

What are the traits she has inherited from you and from her dad?

The impatience is from her dad. He gets really frustrated

(LUCY) 6-6

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Lucy loosens up

From page H4

with herself. Now, she's bloated on writing to long-hand. I had to explain to her that before she could learn long-hand, she has to master writing in script first.

Or when she reads and she can't pronounce a word, she exclaims, "I want to sleep all my tongue!"

From me, she got her thoughtfulness. She's very sweet. She always leaves in little notes and drawings, even if there's no special occasion.

What's your beauty regimen?

I've been using Olay since 1998. Something touched in freckles and whiteheads. Olay took care of that. I had to stop when I got pregnant, though.

I was so ugly when I was pregnant! You forgot my hydrating, [illegible]. After happened to her face? They didn't know that it was hormonal. Adult acne, relapse. And I had to come out on TV and do magazine pictures.

I survived with the help of foundation (makeup concealer), after I gave birth, I swear off heavy makeup!

Now, I use [illegible], toner, moisturizer. Plus, I touched my lips [illegible], I started using eye cream. But nothing beats eight hours of sleep.

What's your stand on plastic surgery?

It's easy for me to say that I'll never go under the knife. But when the time comes, when I could no longer duty given up who knows? I just pray for help so I don't become a slave to it.

I just hope that by the time I reach my 60s...there'll be a new technology than wouldn't require surgery. All you have to do is swallow a pill and all your wrinkles will be erased.

I get scared of faces that've been operated with too much. They all look alike!

How do you keep fit?

Now it's really just dancing. Usually, three times a week. I haven't done Barnes-[illegible] in two months since I quit. I do ballroom dancing on "Shall We Dance." It's really good exercise because I've never been this slim and I've always had a weight problem.

Dancing suited to her you?

It's also because I've taken a healthier approach to eating. I used to love and chew bingo. Sorrrbhh eating [illegible] keep the poundage off. I took it off slowly but surely.

Do you have smooth marital?

Smooth. They say it's granite. But I also put Cinsa Bonne.

What's it like working on the two shows?

"Shall We Dance?" has been running for almost two years now. Since it's a small team, we're great chats, like a family. I really love that show.

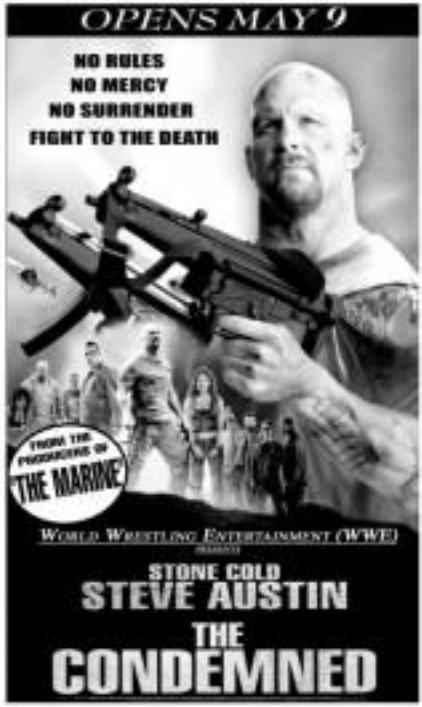
I'm still adjusting on "The Sweet Life," but I'm sure I won't have any problem because it's about things that I love: arts and crafts, cooking, baking, home stuff.

You sure know how to cook!

I can, but I am not totally trained. I can just [illegible] something. Nothing fancy, though. Adlawa and I bake a lot. Just awhile back we baked blueberry cheesecake.

In a pinewood silver a foreign show?

Not after a specific show, but we are inspired by Martha Stewart and Rachael Ray.



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